CONSPIRATIO

Spring 2022

Periodical for
Thinking After Ivan Illich

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the quest for truth cannot thrive
outside the nourishment
of mutual trust

Ivan Illich

About Conspiratio

Conspiratio is neither an academic journal nor a popular magazine. Each issue of Conspiratio comprises essays, thematic articles, book reviews, and occasional translations of texts on or by Illich. All that appears in its pages typifies what Illich called "research by people", which names disciplined studies conducted by those attempting to beautify their own lives by being less dependent, in thought and deed, on the market and the state. For this reason, research by people is open to public debate and contestation. Though conducted through the medium of the written word, the periodical invokes the hoped-for intimacy of con-spiration. For an orientation, consult two essays by Illich: "Research by People" & "The Cultivation of Conspiracy".

Conspiratio encourages contributions from everyone wanting to participate in thinking after Ivan Illich. All contributions are expected to reveal a degree of familiarity with Illich's thought and to engage it in a thoughtful way. All are free to submit essays, book reviews, or translations for publication. Articles contributing to the theme of each issue should be made in response to the call for papers at www.thinkingafterivanillich.net

Conspiratio is published twice a year, in Fall and Spring. It will be available to be read online, downloaded as a pdf file, or received as a printed booklet (for a nominal printing and postage fee). To be apprised of current and forthcoming issues, please register at conspiratio@afterillich.net

CONSPIRATIO
Periodical for Thinking After Ivan Illich
Number 2 Spring 2022

Editor's letter 6

Essays

FABIO MILANA | At the edge of time 13

Thematic Articles: Responses to *An Intellectual Journey*

BROTHER JOHN, TAIZÉ | Apocalypse Now!
A Revaluation of the Thought of Ivan Illich 120

NETO LEÃO | Not a clergyman, just a man 140

ROBERT KUGELMANN | A Gothic Approach:
Reading Maritain after Reading Cayley 152

NICOLA LABANCA | Systems unexpectedness,
flatness and counterproductivity 164

SAJAY SAMUEL | An Unlit Candle 189

JOEY MOKOS | "Go and Do Likewise":
Reconsidering Luke 10:25-37 199

WOLFGANG PALAVER | Ivan Illich:
An Intellectual Journey 214

DAVID CAYLEY | David Cayley responds… 223

Reviews

DENIS ATKINSON |
Educing Ivan Illich by John Baldacchino 243

Translations

IVAN ILLICH | A Construção Institucional
de um Novo Fetiche: a vida humana 251

Editor's letter

Conspiratio is a periodical, and a periodical is different from a scholarly journal or a popular magazine. It collects the fruits of what is grown in a 'garden of low studies', a phrase proposed by Giorgio Agamben. It is a vehicle for those who want to collaborate with each other in thinking after Illich. It is founded on the belief that arguments require the clarity and distance of the written word to be properly understood, even if it is the utterances of fleeting speech that can decisively change a heart. The name *Conspiratio* was previously used by the Mexican poet Javier Sicilia for a publication that is no longer in print. Though we live in the time of conspiracy theories, fake news, and state and corporate propaganda, both Javier and I were inspired to choose the name by a line in Illich's essay titled The Cultivation of Conspiracy — '*…the quest for truth cannot thrive outside the nourishment of mutual trust.*'

This is the second issue of *Conspiratio*. If, twenty years ago, someone had predicted a resurgence of popular and scholarly interest in Illich, he would have been met with restrained skepticism or open incredulity. Yet, that is precisely what has come to pass. In this issue, two peaks of that surging interest find expression. The first peak is represented by the Italian edition of Illich's *Opere Complete* curated by Fabio Milana and supervised by Giorgio Agamben. An English translation of Milana's introduction to the first volume titled *Ivan Illich. Celebrare la consapevolezza. Scritti 1951-1971* (Neri Pozza 2020) is the only essay in this issue because it deserves exclusive attention. It is scrupulously attentive to

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Samuel, S. Editor's Letter. Conspiratio, Spring 2022, p.6-8.

Illich's writings between 1951 and 1971, dense with historical details of Illich's curriculum vitae in those years that are unfamiliar to even those who knew him and contains brilliant insights into the theological and sociological facets of Illich's missiological thought.

The second peak of the rising interest in Illich is represented by David Cayley's remarkable *Ivan Illich: an intellectual journey* published in 2021. There have been numerous reviews of his book, and seven authors have responded to it in this issue. In his appreciation of this 'masterful and comprehensive study', Brother John clarifies why he thinks of Illich as 'the author of an apocalypse.' In the second article, Neto Leao suggests that Illich missiological thinking was forged in the cauldron of his pilgrimage through Latin America during the late 50s and early 60s. Leao's claim can be useful compared to Milana's assessment of the matter. Robert Kugelmann insists that understanding Illich's writings requires appreciating his 'Gothic approach', which he says underwrites Illich's sense of a person and 'all of Illich's understanding of the modern age.' Nicola Labanca explores the status of the person in the age of systems. Whether the person can survive the technological or 'shine forth in all its nudity' —to pick up a phrase from Levinas cited by Kugelmann— remains an open question. Cayley proposes understanding Illich as a 'philosopher of complementarity.' Sajay Samuel asks if complementarity is a matter of the tension between opposites or the relation between opposites in the context of some third, enframing whole. Illich noted that the general understanding of the parable of the Samaritan was as a commandment of how to act towards those less fortunate. In contrast, Illich's reading emphasized the radical freedom exercised by the Samaritan. Joey Mokos reinterprets Luke 10:25-37 to suggest that it is not the Samaritan but the man in the ditch who offers the recommended model of behavior.

Finally, Wolfgang Palaver's review of the book was written for Girardians and also picks up on a theological issue. He claims that, unlike Girard, Illich's theology of death 'is closer to tragic thinking than to the biblical spirit.' David Cayley's reply to all these comments, suggestions, challenges, and appreciations rounds out the collection of articles in this issue.

The reviews section features John Baldacchino's *Educing Ivan Illich: reform, contingency, and disestablishment*. The section on translations contains the Portuguese text of *The Institutional Construction of a New Fetish: a human life* by Ivan Illich. It is particularly timely given the articles by Mokos and Palaver. This translation is part of the forthcoming translation by Neto Leao and Nilo Coradini of Illich's *In the Mirror of the Past*. What is happening in Brazil represents a third emerging peak of the interest in Illich's thought and work.

I invite all authors and readers to discuss points of disagreement and clarification on the Forum. That space is intended to foster informal collaboration in thinking after Ivan Illich. I remind readers that the focus of the upcoming third volume of *Conspiratio* will be the question of the *techo comun* or the common roof. It will explore the concept of limits and appropriate scale in economic, social, personal, and political matters. All kinds of articles are welcome — annotated bibliographies of scale in the natural and social sciences, examples of living within community-imposed limits on technology, the meaning of limits and related concepts in Illich, and replies to specific suggestions in the note titled *The need for a common roof* published in the previous issue. Everyone is invited to not only submit articles, but also essays, book reviews, and translations. The deadline for all submissions for the upcoming issue is October 15, 2022.

Essays

At the edge of time*

by Fabio Milana

I. The endeavour to systematically gather together all the writings by Ivan Illich (1926-2002) requires no justification since, at present, no such collection exists in any language. On the other hand, a few preliminary remarks on the present volume are in order.

The first of these concerns the chosen time frame. While such temporal subdivisions are essentially prompted by practical considerations, they necessarily rely on specific, defensible criteria. In the present case, boundaries are by no means clear-cut or compartmentalized. In terms of Illich's biography, for instance, one would be hard-put to deny the essential continuity of the portion of his life comprised between 1951 and 1976, i.e. between his ordination, his degree in philosophy, his resettlement to the US on the one hand, and the closing down of the *Centro Intercultural de Documentación* (CIDOC) in Cuernavaca on the other, when the texts developed and discussed in that exceptional laboratory had already been published and were known the world over. Those twenty-five years followed closely upon Illich's formative years, and may be understood as the period of *vita activa* in his life; a phase was followed in its turn by another one of approximately equal length in which he progressively withdrew from public life, both in terms of his lifestyle and the topics on which he focused his intellectual activity. Each of those phases was quite varied, sometimes deeply so; this is es-

* Formerly 'Introduzione', in Milana, Fabio (ed.), (2020). *Ivan Illich. Celebrare la consapevolezza. Scritti 1951-1971*. Opere complete vol. I. Vicenza: Neri Pozza, pp. 13-90.

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Milana, F. At the edge of time.
Conspiratio, Spring 2022, p.13-117.

pecially true of the time span between 1951 and 1976, which marked the attainment of his maturity, and was consequently a period full of unexpected experiences, defining changes, and unwavering commitments. Disrupting its underlying continuity, however, would mean, among other things, to lose sight of the "quality of the times", which even a superficial examination shows to be fairly similar to everybody else's history, or at least to the history of the Western world in the second half of the 20th century.

The selection of 1971 as the present collection's end-year has therefore less to do with Ivan Illich's existence as a human being than with his activity as a writer. The inception of the latter may be clearly identified in the year 1970, when *Celebration of Awareness*, an anthology of his own writings edited and commented by himself, was published as the expression of a patent desire to present the public with an eloquent, if not exemplary, self-portrait. However, the same purpose may not be ascribed, at least not as straightforwardly, to the two collections published in the same year: though issued shortly before *Celebration of Awareness*, they were less ambitious and focused on more specific topics (the first of them, *Bolivia y la revolución cultural*, was a small volume on radical education reform, directly sponsored by the local "revolutionary" government; the other one, *The Church, Change and Development*, was of a religious, or one should perhaps rather say ecclesiological nature, and was also sponsored by a third party, namely an Episcopalian institution). His original purpose, nonetheless, did to some extent occasion the 1971 *Ensajos sobre la transcendencia*, also a self-edited anthology that documented his academic endeavours which had been left out of previous collections.

The year 1971 that marks the present collection's time limit also witnessed the publication of *Deschooling Society*; its content, however, had been prepared the previous year and

the essays that were included in it had been widely anticipated in the writings which Illich completed in those same months, including in *Celebration of Awareness* itself. It is nonetheless telling that despite its fundamental importance the latter was translated into foreign languages – and indeed Italian – only on the strength of the former's success, which somehow also overshadowed it; in some cases, *Celebration of Awareness* even had to wait until after the publication of *Tools for Conviviality* (1973). In other words, *Deschooling Society* paved the way for an altogether different cycle in Illich's production: the themes and the target audience he addressed in it and the international acclaim he eventually enjoyed ushered in a new phase in his writing, as has been attempted to outline here. It is for these reasons that his best-known works issued between 1971 and 1976 are to be published in a subsequent volume. This notwithstanding, it is quite evident that each of them had been anticipated in his earlier works, and that the very cycle encompassing them had been devised at an early stage: indeed, hints in this sense are to be found also in the writings contained in this volume.

The aspect which has been intentionally foregrounded here is different and unprecedented: a kind of prehistory of Illich's writing, presented just as he summarised it himself, either in person or through third parties, between 1970 and 1971. It essentially concerns his activity in the twenty years that preceded that critical turning point —by no means obligatory and perhaps also painful—after which he became a "writer of books", to use the expression which Father Lorenzo Milani at once coined and disavowed in those very years. Before he published his first book in 1970, Illich was already a well-known personality of international standing: indeed, a Latin-American government had formally requested his patronage, Yale University had entrusted him their century-old Beecher Lectures, the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* had

asked him to contribute to its annual issue of *Great Ideas Today*, *Der Spiegel* had devoted a long interview to him, and a well-informed biographical essay on his life that is of paramount importance to this day was already in circulation.[1] All of this happened at the height of an active engagement which, while intellectual, was not strictly-speaking typical of an intellectual, be it a scholar, a professor or a prophet: indeed, his commitment revolved at first around his hands-on pastoral approach as a Catholic parish priest (1951-1956) and then focussed on the promotion of culture and development on a tropical island (1956-1960); it was later followed by his activity as cultural mediator between the three Americas (1961-1965) and as spiritual and political agitator in the dizzying turmoil of the early Post-Conciliar Era (1966-1968).[2]

1 It is Francine Du Plessix Gray's 'The rules of the game', published on *The New Yorker* on 25th April 1970; it was subsequently also published as part of a book (see Du Plessix Gray, Francine, (1970). *Divine Disobedience. Profiles in Catholic Radicalism.* New York: Knopf, pp. 229-322). For the other events and texts quoted here, see below.

2 Illich first served as deputy parish priest at the Church of the Incarnation in New York (in the Washington Heights neighbourhood, part of the Manhattan Community District). He stood out for his commitment to Puerto Rican immigrants, and he eventually managed to engage Cardinal Spellman's whole archdiocese in a reflection on the newly acquired parishioners as well as in pastoral action in their favour. As a result of this endeavour, and thanks to the skills Illich acquired in it, the Bishop of Ponce requested Illich's Ordinary to allow him to become the deputy rector of the Catholic University in Puerto Rico; this came about in the autumn of 1956, when Illich moved to the island. Among other things, he set up there a training centre for the clergy, religious orders and laity from the dioceses of Boston and New York, who were also actively involved in the material and spiritual assistance of incoming immigrants; he then became rapidly integrated in the island's academic and political milieu and was also appointed to the board of organisations active in the planning of Puerto Rico's economic and social development. In 1961 he established in Cuernavaca, in Mexico, the *Centre for Intercultural Formation* (CIF) aimed at Latin America's aspiring missionaries; it quickly evolved into a place of contact and cultural development for intellectuals and religious leaders from the two Continents. In 1963 and 1964 he took part in the Second Vatican Council as *peritus* for Cardinal Suenens, one of the assembly's four moderators. In 1966 he was appointed head of the *Centro Intercultural de Documentación* (CIDOC), which had previously been a department of CIF. Thereafter he gradually turned into a point of reference for those who voiced the harshest criticism on the US's role in world affairs, and especially on the US Churches' missionary activity; in consequence of this he came into conflict with the Vatican between 1968 and 1969.

While his ideological collocation increasingly came to be on the fringes of the Catholic Church, he constantly preserved links to the latter through a network of personal and institutional relationships that reached up to the highest levels, as well as through a strong bond of deep and unquestioned faith. His was the life of a Christian who was acutely aware of and indefatigably active in the world he inhabited, albeit neither exclusively nor indiscriminately; a man whose extraordinary working resilience, organisational competence, social and relational savvy, and uncommon intelligence were readily acknowledged by all those who had dealings with him. It was undoubtedly the crisis in his relationship with the Church, which gained dramatic momentum between the latter's inquest at the end of 1967 and his decision to irrevocably give up his priestly ministry in March 1969, that put an end to this state of affairs and brought about (one can hardly say accelerate, if the timing is carefully examined) his "conversion" to a quite different *status perfectionis*.

In September 1970, at 44 years of age, Ivan D. Illich began a new life as a "writer of books" (Father Lorenzo Milani, who had passed away a few years before at exactly the same age, was fully convinced that by dying he was going to be spared the humiliation of a similar fate).[3] This new beginning

3 As was the case above, there is here a reference to the letter Father Milani sent to Giorgio Pecorini on 7th April 1967, in which he begged his friend to claim the authorship of *Letter to a Teacher*, which at the time was about to be published, on behalf of the 'children from the school of Barbiana': 'It is only right it should be theirs because, first of all, it is the truth [...] and secondly, because I do not wish to die an accomplished man, that is, as the author of a book' (see Melloni, Alberto (ed.), (2017). *Tutte le opere*. Volume II. Milan: Mondadori, p. 1363; and Scuola di Barbiana (1970). *Letter to a Teacher*. London: Penguin Books. These two peers (Father Milani was born in Florence in 1923), were both of Jewish extraction, and both freely decided to become priests to answer their calling; they were both subversive *within* the tradition, and while their respective positions on educational matters appeared to be diametrically opposite, they could not in fact have been closer to one another. A comparison between them obviously cannot be drawn here; it is nonetheless to be recommended as one of the most fascinating chapters of a possible future research on religious psychology and priestly spirituality in the 20th century.

was, however, also a continuation, if it is true that this new public role allowed the revolutionary spirit he had brought to maturity within CIDOC to find an outlet and a receptive audience. Discriminating between these two extremes – of continuation or of a new phase – would require a fine balance, which is not possible to achieve if the perspective involved is that of the *auctor*, as in the present case. Indeed, such balance was not achieved in the *Celebration of Awareness* either, since only two of the twelve texts included in it dated back to before 1967; the largest portion of them was constituted by the writings from that decisive year or from the ones immediately following it, the ones which directly anticipated the approach adopted by Illich in editing the 1970 collection of his own writings.

The four collections which appeared between 1970 and 1971 admittedly also contained all the most significant writings from the period before 1967. The careful perusing of the present volume's index, however, will reveal that about half of them were added to Illich's bibliography only recently, and some even as late as the present publication: this is especially true of the earliest writings which Illich issued under a pseudonym, and which he never openly claimed as his own as long as he lived.[4] Moreover, their overall number only accounts for a third of the sixty titles gathered here, a clear sign that they were rare instances occasioned by the circumstances, even though some of those circumstances may have suited Illich's work in progress and its objectives rather well. Indeed, those writings were in fact mere working tools, the revealing

4 These were first mentioned by Joseph P. Fitzpatrick S.J. in his 'Ivan Illich as We Knew Him in the 1950s', which appeared in Hoinacki and Mitcham (see Hoinacki, Lee, & Mitcham, Carl (eds.), (2002). The Challenges of Ivan Illich. A Collective Reflection. Albany (NY): State of New York University Press, pp. 35-42). They may now be found in Borremans, Valentina, & Samuel, Sajay (eds.), (2018). The Powerless Church and Other Selected Writings, 1955-1985. Penn State (PA): Penn State University Press; see also Part V and VI in the present volume.

outcome of a busy work schedule rather than of a scholar's peaceful environment; they also implied a context-driven urgency rather than the more relaxed pace of a long-term project. Some of them, including major ones, never reached the printing stage, and nothing would be known about them had they not been included — at times still in the cursive, draft-like condition of their originals — in some of the collections mentioned above (this would incidentally raise the whole issue of the possible existence of other unpublished material). A few of the features contained in them, of course, survived beyond the threshold of the year 1967, when Illich's writing became more explicitly militant and less discontinuous; indeed, they even cropped up in *Celebration of Awareness* and in *Deschooling Society*, since each of their constituent parts had a fairly troubled gestation before they finally managed to fit together as a whole. In the new season that followed 1967 none of the authorial seeds which Illich sowed fell beside the road or among thorns and brambles: in the preceding period, however, he was a rather careless and overwrought sower, who was later forced to either retrace his steps in his own writings or to resort to the researcher's doggedness to amend any shortcomings. The two periods are therefore at once the similar and distinct: in fact, one did not prefigure the other, as one may be inclined to assume by examining them from the standpoint of the present time. They should rather be seen as a human and Christian path pursued for its own reasons, which at a given moment abruptly changed its course and led Illich to become fully engaged as a writer, well beyond his previously limited, self-contained attempts.

In view of the above, a second necessary clarification concerns the sequence in which the texts are presented here. The volume begins with the four 1970-1971 collections mentioned above, and special emphasis has been placed on the one which is to be considered the most "authoritative", in the

widest sense of the word. The picture provided by them has been further integrated with texts that were first published in the anthology edited by Illich's literary heirs in 2018, *The Powerless Church and Other Selected Writings*, *1955-1985*: this was notably the first to include some of the writings he penned under a pseudonym, the earliest ones, as has already been stated. A further group of texts which have hitherto remained dispersed, or which are in some cases just plainly unknown, rounds off the present overview; taken together, these account for a good third of the ones gathered here. At the end of the volume, Illich's 1951 doctoral dissertation — *Die philosophischen Grundlagen der Geschichtsschreibung bei Arnold J. Toynbee* [*The philosophical foundations of Arnold J. Toynbee's historiography*]—has also been included, and it is the only text to be published for the first time.[5]

A Table of Contents organised in such a fashion could give readers the impression that its chronological organisation is rather chaotic, and that it confusingly moves backwards from the later, more mature texts to the earlier, more personal ones. Such an impression would indeed be justified, and it has to be admitted that since most texts were originally issued as part of collections, the most sensible option would have seemingly been to arrange them here in a chronological order. Even if the issues raised by uncertain dating, by the discrepancy between the time of their composition and their publication, and by the existence of various versions of the same text had all been disregarded, however, such a decision would still have entailed the *a priori* elimination, by means of their deconstruction, of all previous collections, including the one which is now generally accepted as Illich's canon: that has been deemed to be too high a price to pay, and not just

5 Three interviews given by Illich between 1967 and 1970 have been added in the Appendix; they were selected for their significant contribution to a better understanding of his thought in that period.

by those of the general public who are already familiar with him and his work. It has therefore been preferred to introduce both the expert reader and the new recruit to how the editorial history of this *auctor* materially unfolded within a short, well-defined historical period: it has neither been reduced to a mere writing exercise that was homogeneous only in theory, but never in actual practice, nor has it been reconstructed only on the basis of a bibliographical taxonomy (the support of an up-to-date bibliography has nonetheless been provided, and all texts are accompanied by an apparatus of notes outlining their gestation, composition and editorial history).

It is quite evident that such an approach does not eliminate but actually highlights the need to provide a historical context for an activity which, in all of its phases undeniably hinged also on thinking and writing, and which at present must in fact rely on the written word as its only lingering witness. The following pages have been devoted, as far as possible, to this very end.

II. Illich's formative years will be dealt with more extensively elsewhere.[6] The present collection only concentrates on their

6 Illich was born in Vienna on 4th September 1926 from Ivan Peter 'Piero' (1890-1942), the first-born child of an Italian-speaking family from Split (Dalmatia) that was active in maritime trade, and from Ellen Rose 'Maexie' Regenstreif (1901- 1965), the daughter of Viennese Jewish parents who had converted to Protestantism, and who owned a large sawmill in Bosnia. He lived between Split and Vienna until he was six; after his parents' separation, he followed his mother to Vienna together with his two younger brothers, Sascha and Micha, who were born in 1928. There he lived in the Regenstreifs' villa in Pötzleinsdorf, where he was brought up in the Catholic faith, as his mother had in the meantime converted to that religion; he then attended secondary school at a local institute run by Piarists. After the death of both his father and his grandfather, Fritz Regenstreif (1868-1941), he relocated to Italy with his family in 1942; in 1944 he obtained his secondary school leaving certificate from a scientific lyceum in Florence, and he then enrolled on the course run by the Philosophy Department of the Gregorian University in Rome. In November 1945 he entered the seminary at Collegio Capranica in Rome. He was awarded a licentiate degree in philosophy in 1947, and one in theology in 1951. On 24th of March of the same year he was ordained priest; in September he graduated in philosophy at the Faculty of Theology at Salzburg university, and on 6th November he landed in the US, where he joined his family.

tail-end, which, after all, comprises almost everything that has survived from that period: to wit, the dissertation for the degree in philosophy which he discussed in Salzburg in September 1951, the same year in which he obtained his license in theology from the Pontifical Gregorian University and was ordained priest in Rome. It will be rather easy for readers to pick their way through its unavoidable technical aspects, and to grasp the real meaning of what was, at the end of the day, Illich's farewell to Toynbee, the object of his study. It was a farewell inasmuch as it is quite evident that the graduand who claimed to have worked on just a dozen of Toynbee's theoretical pages (out of a huge production encompassing thousand), must have in fact become deeply familiar with his work, given the competence with which he was able to argue his criticism of it. It is not hard to conceive such familiarity on his part, despite the exclusion of Toynbee's work from the ecclesiastical courses which young Illich attended in Rome at the time. The years immediately following the Second World War witnessed the establishment of a new world order, which among other things entailed the geopolitical spread of socialism, formerly confined to one country alone. Even if the tragic personal and family circumstances that burdened young Illich's past are not taken into consideration, it should not come as a surprise that a lively spirit such as his still managed to take notice of the debate of the day within contemporary European circles, including Catholic ones: namely, what was then variously termed as a crisis of civilisation, a clash of cultures, the future of civilisation, the meaning of history, or the destiny of mankind. Toynbee's fortunes were at their zenith in this period, resting as they did on the first volumes of his monumental *Study of History*,[7] and on the international renown which the

7 Toynbee, Arnold J., (1934). *A Study of History*. Volume I. Introduction; Volume II. The Geneses of Civilizations; Volume III. The Growths of Civilizations. London - New York -Toronto: Oxford University Press.

perceptiveness of his 1947 *Civilisation on Trial* pamphlet had brought him;[8] the latter was in all likelihood what drew the young seminarist's attention to him, perhaps on the advice of his mentor Jacques Maritain (an advice which may possibly have been given in a public address in Rome in 1948).[9] What really matters in this setting, which was clearly far more varied and articulated than it is necessary to dwell on here, is not so much the fact that this young man, who was after all just about to reach his maturity, dissociated himself from the philosophical foundations of Toynbee's historiography: it is rather that his knowledge of a series of topics which Toybee had handled with perhaps less depth, but with greater visibility and emphasis.

A review of those topics would identify the most important one in Toynbee's "historical pluralism", *i.e.* the acknowledgement of the multiplicity of subjects and perspectives (such as the twenty-odd civilisations which he isolated) which had determined, and to some extent continued to determine humanity's experience on the planet, where and when that same experience had become, in a discontinuous

Toynbee, Arnold J., (1939). *A Study of History*. Volume IV. The Breakdowns of Civilizations; Volume V. The Disintegrations of Civilizations, part I; Volume VI. The Disintegrations of Civilizations, part II. London - New York -Toronto: Oxford University Press.
His work was later brought to completion in the following publications: Toynbee, Arnold J., (1954). *A Study of History*. Volume VII. Universal States, Universal Churches; Volume VIII. Heroic Ages, Contacts between Civilizations in Space; Volume IX. Contacts between Civilizations in Time, Renaissances etc.; Volume X. The Inspirations of Historians. London - New York -Toronto: Oxford University Press.
Toynbee, Arnold J., (1959). *A Study of History*. Volume XI. Historical Atlas and Gazetteer. London - New York -Toronto: Oxford University Press.
Toynbee, Arnold J., (1961). *A Study of History*. Volume XII. Reconsiderations. London - New York -Toronto: Oxford University Press.
The Italian public is well-acquainted with their condensed version contained in Somervell, David C., (1974). *Storia comparata delle civil*tà. Roma: Newton Compton.

8 Toynbee, A. J. (1943) *Civilisation on Trial*. London - New York: Oxford University Press.

9 Maritain, Jacques, (1948). 'Les civilisations humaines et le rôle des chrétiens.' In: Pax Romana, Mouvement international des intellectuels catholiques, *Les Intellectuels dans la Chrétienté*. Roma, pp. 85-105.

and polygenetic fashion, 'history'. Thence Toynbee's refusal to reduce universal history to a privileged course and discourse, which entailed a significant departure from the implicit premise of Eurocentric historicism, and an anticipation of sorts of what was later to become known as *World History*.[10] The second topic on the list would be the perceived need to order this plurality of historical experiences according to criteria other than their mere chronological sequence, namely by means of a systematic comparison among different cultures that could highlight their actual similarities: its purpose was ultimately the development of a science of human events that could isolate the regular occurrences deemed by Toynbee to be the "laws" inherent to the emergence, development and decline of human "civilisations". The third topic would be the emphasis which Toynbee increasingly placed on the phenomenology of the exchanges and interactions between those civilisations; this approach marked out his work sharply against the organicist monism of Oswald Spengler's cumbersome and celebrated earlier work, *The Decline of the West*. In particular, the dynamics of the contact and clash between civilisation were monitored by Toynbee with a heart-felt sense of apprehension that was further stoked by the world's impending "Westernisation": his anti-imperialism prompted him to fear the latter as detrimental to the achievement of world peace, which he

10 Cfr. Gozzini, Giovanni, (2016). 'Toynbee padre della World History?' In: Leonardi, Federico, & Maggioni, Luca (eds.), *Arnold J. Toynbee. Il mondo oltre le civiltà*. Milan: Unicopli, pp. 191-202. The other essays contained in this volume would also deserve to be mentioned in view of the extensive information and comments with which they documented Toynbee's renewed popularity in the present global era. In Italy the philosopher Pietro Rossi has devoted relentless attention to the work of this British historian and scholar of the philosophy of history. His earliest work (Rossi, P., (1952). *Indagine storica e visione della storia in Arnold J. Toynbee*. Cuneo: Edizioni di "Filosofia") was perhaps derived from a university dissertation that was contemporary with Illich's work, and could therefore be usefully compared with it. It was later reworked and expanded (see Rossi, P. (1960). *Storia e storicismo nella filosofia contemporanea*. Milan: Lerici, and especially pp. 333-360), and had its most recent development in the essay 'Storia, civiltà, religione nell'opera di Toynbee: un rapporto problematico' which was included in the above-mentioned volume by Leonardi & Maggioni (2016: 51-61).

saw as the final goal of *the* history of civilisation.

It is quite obvious that the mere selection of these topics cannot possibly provide an accurate or thorough portrait of Toynbee's work, nor do they cover other aspects that are just as important to gain a proper understanding of young Illich's intellectual profile. Nonetheless, it may be pointed out that the earliest known *acta et verba* (deeds and words) by this young man already displayed a keen awareness of environmental and historical differences: at a diachronic level, for instance, he showed a timely perception of the "challenges" posed by the evolving social and cultural conditions, while at a synchronic one he had a deep understanding of the tensions that pervaded the contemporary material, mental and spiritual world, sometimes even within the same civilisation or religious denomination. It may be surmised, therefore, that the existence of a "plurality of worlds" and the dramatic circumstances surrounding their mutual interaction were self-evident to him almost right from the outset: not only was he the issue of a marriage that was mixed in more than one way, but he also grew up east of the Danzig-Trieste line, in that territory reaching as far as the Pacific Ocean in which, according to Toynbee's *The World and the West* (1953), 'the pattern of the linguistic map is not like a patchwork quilt; it is like a shot-silk robe. […] The speakers of different languages are not neatly sorted out from one another, as they are in Western Europe; they are geographically intermingled in alternated houses on the same streets of the same towns and villages.'[11] At this early stage there is no need to bring into play Illich's estrangement from the 'nation state' construct, or his opposition to its homogenising devices, among which the "taught mother tongue" ranked first. Suffice it to recall here, even as a merely evocative suggestion, that between the age of twelve and

11 Toynbee, A. J. (1953) *The World and The West*. New York – London: Oxford University Press, p. 73.

thirty[12] he led in succession the life of a foreigner, a half-Aryan, a half-Jew, an illegal immigrant, a stateless person, and a refugee, and that he was for good measure also a member of the Catholic clergy: thus, he naturally perceived himself to be both a mixture of, and a departure from, pre-conceived identities, and used to identify (as may be inferred from the poems he wrote in his teen years) with the figure of The Wandering Jew. It is therefore hardly surprising that all these experiences should have informed his way of thinking.

However, the passion which Illich felt for diversity required, for its part, tools that could provide an adequate reading and classification of phenomena across eras and domains: if not outright 'development laws' as Toynbee understood them, with their dubious mixture of naturalism and providentialism, then at least morphological and typological inventories such as the ones that human sciences were developing in Illich's formative decades. Indeed, there is little doubt that Illich had a keen and long-lasting interest in sociology, social psychology, anthropology, and religious sciences among other subjects, or that these disciplines contributed greatly to shape his approach to worldly and political matters, as well as to his later intellectual endeavours such as a historian. The detached, decentralised stance he adopted towards historicism in terms of *Typenlehre*, however, does not imply that young Illich was oblivious to the issue of defining the relationship between the one and the multiple in clear historical terms, and within history's own perspective. Illich may not have been familiar with the relationship between the various historical civilisations and human civilisation understood as a single whole, which Toynbee had cautiously come to define in an increasingly religious perspective; nonetheless, he was most certainly acquainted with the analogical relationship between Christiani-

12 Illich became a naturalised US citizen in 1956, five years after his relocation to that country; thereafter the US passport was the only one he ever held.

ty and its various implementations throughout Christendom, between the Church and the various Christian dimensions, and between unchanging principles and their transitory refractions which Maritain had adopted as the founding rock of his *Humanisme intégral*. In that context, if the way to a 'new Christendom' was really to be paved, the extreme of *dissimilitudo* (*i.e.* the specific historical period represented by the contemporary world) could not help being especially emphasised and approached in a boldly innovative fashion;[13] though practical caution as well as theoretical needs also demanded a fairer degree of balance in favour of the opposite — transhistorical extreme of the analogy. It may be pointed out in passing that Father Albert Auer, Illich's supervisor in Salzburg for his *Dissertation*, had been looking for just such a balance in his courses and writings on political philosophy,[14] albeit with a different distribution of emphasis. Within the Catholic Church itself, moreover, a well-known document such as the pastoral letter issued by Cardinal Suhard in 1947 owed its reputation to the fact that it managed to express, within the venerable structures of traditional ecclesiology, the sense of unease conveyed by contemporary times, felt to be unprecedentedly alien to the Catholic Church's message.[15] In all of these instances it may be claimed that the balance which was being sought had a centre of gravity that was tilted forward, as it were, towards the challenges posed by the present time and the future looming ahead; it was almost as if the unifying principle, for instance the Gospel, was at once a principle of openness and of differentiation, and, by extension, of move-

13 Maritain, Jacques, (1936) *Humanisme intégral*. Paris: Aubier-Montaigne.

14 It was these which Father Auer expected to 'demonstrate how [natural law] [could] satisfy two distinct needs: being *absolute*, and enabling numerous *articulations*' at a historical level (see Auer, A. (1952). *Würde und Freiheit des Menschen*. Salzburg: Verlagsgemeinschaft "Stifterbibliothek", p. 25).

15 Suhard, Emmanuel C., (1947). *Essor ou déclin de l'Église. Lettre pastorale, Carême de l'an de grâce* 1947. Paris: Éditions du Vitrail.

ment within historical time. The fact remains, nonetheless, that Catholic thought – or at least the one inspired by Thomism – was, so to speak, new to the task of conceptualising the dynamism of human history *sua iuxta et propria principia*.

Toynbee identified a mechanism of action and reaction, or stimulus and response, as the foundation of such historical dynamism, and believed that it could mobilise life's dormant energy to force it to face its otherness, namely the material world (as well as the artificial world represented by a certain kind of crystallised institutional set-up) with its hampering, oppressive inertia. In his view, the predominance of the vital over the inanimate, that is, of freedom over necessity and of spirit over matter, embodied civilisation's ascending phase, in which individuals or small minorities still possessed sufficient creative energy to face the obstacles posed by their environment, in order to differentiate themselves from it and to reintegrate it within themselves at a higher organisational level. Although that theoretical model was ultimately suggested by Behaviourism, Toynbee derived it in fact from Bergson's *Deux sources*, or at least transcribed it with the same kind of wording; it was thus wrapped up in a vitalist approach meant to sublimate its underlying determinism by replacing *adjusting* to the environment with *transforming* it, and by exchanging the primacy of environmental '*pression*' with that of mystical '*aspiration*'. As is well known, both Bergson and his afore-mentioned work constituted an important point of reference also for Maritain, who worked on the latter to winnow the master's upright 'intentions' from his erroneous 'conceptualisations',[16] and it is worth noticing that Illich patently adopted the same approach with Toynbee's work.[17] In both cases it was a matter of delivering "life's movement" from the yoke

16 Maritain, Jacques, (1944). *De Bergson à Thomas d'Aquin. Essais de métaphysique et de morale*. New York: La Maison de France, especially Chapter 1 and 2.

17 See the *Introduzione* to the *Dissertation* in Part VII.

of an underlying (and perhaps even claimed) empiricism, in order to clarify the real nature of the process of becoming and the role which human freedom played in it. 'Existential Thomism' recovered from Thomas Aquinas 'the radical primacy of existence over essence'[18] by analogically applying the same relationship that exists between act and potency to those two levels of being, which are *per se* distinct and noncommunicating. Thus, it was all about reclaiming the primacy of actuosity against the traditional imagery of a self-contained universe made up of intelligible essences, an actuosity which through contingency partakes in the pure, absolute Act (not simply of thought, but mainly) of existence: the endlessly *Alive*.[19]

The philosophy of being was therefore recast on the basis of a concept that could not be conceptualised: namely, that which purely exists ('what has as its essence not being an essence', as Gilson was wont to say). It became vitally un-

18 Gilson, Étienne, (1945). *Le Thomisme*. Paris: Vrin, p. 50; Gilson, Étienne, (1948). *L'être et l'essence.* Paris*:* Vrin. As can be easily fathomed, this undeniably important episode has to be contextualised within the wider and far more complex events that affected Thomism after Pope Leo XIII's *restitutio* by means of his *Aeterni Patris* (1878). A useful overview is to be found in Ventimiglia (see Ventimiglia, Giovanni (2019). 'Il neo-tomismo e il dibattito sulla metafisica classica nel Novecento.' In: Berti, Enrico (ed.), *Storia della metafisica*. Roma: Carocci, Chapter XIII).

19 Illich discussed the notion of 'contingency' extensively in the last conversations he had with Cayley, (see Cayley, David, (2005). Contingency, part I: 'A World in the Hands of God.' In: Cayley, David, *The Rivers North of the Future*. Toronto: Anansi Press, pp. 64-70). He went back to the subject in the last year of his life, in the seminar that was held in May 2002 in the coenobium in Camaldoli, 'a house built at a time and in a world that were still ruled by the idea of contingency and of reliance on God, by the notion that we, just like everything else around us, are the outcome of a continuous creative act on the part of God. – Saint Thomas envisaged contingency as a part of Western learning, and identified it with the inner certainty that at any given moment we are not simply in God's presence, but that God adds his own being to the essence. – This is what Maritain used to teach in the only course he ever delivered during his stay at Princeton […]' (see Illich, Ivan, & Sermonti, G. (2015). *La cospirazione cristiana, nella tirannia della scienza e della tecnica*. Firenze: Libreria Editrice Fiorentina, p. 90). It may be noted that it is in this perspective that his argument against the transformation of life into an 'idol' at the hands of modern preachers, both Catholic and non-Catholic, is to be understood, as exemplified by his 'The Institutional Construction of a New Fetish: Human Life' (see Illich, Ivan, (1992). *In the Mirror of the Past. Lectures and Addresses 1978-1990*. London - New York: Marion Boyars, especially pp. 224-226).

balanced, and became the philosophy of a superabundance of being, or, to put it in other words, of its dynamism; it merely awaited the moment it could achieve its fulfilment as a philosophy of history (as Maritain explained in his commentary to an early work by Aquinas, on which Illich would deliver a seminar in his stead in Princeton in 1954).[20] In this fashion, however, the historicity of being and mankind's historical nature – or, to put it differently, God's freedom, which expresses and restrains itself in His creatures, and mankind's freedom, which is admittedly weighed down by its own past implementations– acquired a metaphysical definition and ethical connotations which were unknown to Bergson's and Toynbee's mysterious 'vital impulse': the latter was, in fact, suspended between a biological and a mystical level, and did not require any conscious mediation. Maritain, on the other hand, held that it was indeed conscience (or, to be more precise, the *prise de conscience*, which lay at the root of a good deal of *conscientização*, and of Illich's own *awareness*) that constituted the pivotal meeting point between essence (the 'historical ideal', in the present case) and existence (the sometimes slow and drawn-out 'instauration' process which introduces that ideal into history's body); it was indeed through this 'growth in awareness' that 'all the great advances in the modern age' had been, and were still being, originated.[21]

20 Maritain, Jacques, (1947). *Court traité de l'existence et de l'existant*. Paris: Hartmann; Aquinas, Thomas, *De ente et essentia* (1254-1256). As David Cayley related: 'I remember on my next trip to New York going to Princeton to see Jacques Maritain, the philosopher, who was then living there [...] I had seen him occasionally in the United States because when he had his heart attack, I was honoured to substitute for him in a seminar he directed of the *de ente et essentia* of St. Thomas.' (see Cayley, David, (1992). *Ivan Illich in Conversation*. Toronto: House of Anansi Press, p. 61).

21 Maritain discussed this aspect at length in Chapter VI, 'The Historic Possibilities of the Realisation of a New Christendom', of his *Humanisme Intégral*. A deeper analysis of the metaphysical topic of 'subsistence', an intermediate stage that acts as link between 'essence' and 'existence', is beyond the scope of this introduction; it suffices to say that in human history said intermediate function has been performed by the *prise de conscience*.

Once the *energy* of becoming was reclaimed in this way, it became available to Catholic thought to be mobilised in the latter's stand-off with modernity:[22] a modernity which history's dynamism had ushered in, only to have it later jeopardised at the hands of the aberrant, dehumanising outlook taken on by modern political institutions, technology, and science. Especially intense was the debate with Marxism, which in those years was felt to be the true and best heir to that modernity. Christian humanism acknowledged the important role which it ascribed to the human desire for emancipation and change but disagreed with Marxism's tendency to conflate it with history's immanent movement: the inevitable outcome was the loss of mankind's own freedom, of its indeterminacy, and ultimately of its transcendence.[23] On this matter, much could be added and much would have to be qualified. If the discussion is to be confined to the 1940s, however, it is important to at least mention (in an altogether different perspective and from a different critical standpoint) Erich Fromm's analysis of the ambiguous nature of the modern world as caught between the unprecedented possibilities of individual self-realisation afforded by the new times, and the equally unprecedented sense of powerlessness and isolation that weighed down on individuals, and pushed them to

22 This specific background to Illich's thought has been little-investigated in the relevant literature. Todd Hartch missed the point completely when he wrote: 'Maritain and Thomas Aquinas made Illich into [...] someone rooted not in the spirit of his own age, but in the thought of the past. Illich by no means neglected the great thinkers, Christian and secular, of the twentieth century [...] but he always did so from afar' (Hartch, T., (2015). *The Prophet of Cuernavaca. Ivan Illich and the Crisis of the West*. Oxford - New York: Oxford University Press, p. 21). Exceedingly generic was also the reference to Maritain and his "neo-Thomism" made by Bruno-Jofré and Igelmo Zaldívar (see Bruno-Jofré, Rosa, & Igelmo Zaldívar, Jon, (2016). 'Monsignor Ivan Illich's Critique of the Institutional Church, 1960-1966.' *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* LXVII, 3, pp. 571-572).

23 See for instance Journet, Charles, (1949). 'D'une philosophie chrétienne de l'histoire et de la culture.' In: *Jacques Maritain. Son oeuvre philosophique*, Bibliothèque de la Revue thomiste. Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, pp. 33-61.

regress and flee.[24] Fromm identified in those two vectors, the free expression of the self (*i.e.* the free flow of life's energy) and the alienation of the self in the institutions of social conformity, the two fundamental polarities of psychic life, in accordance with the psychoanalytic theory and practice which he himself reformed;[25] this dialectical opposition was then transferred to the religious field, and expressed as the contrast between an 'authoritarian' religion and a 'humanistic' one,[26] a concept which was by no means foreign to Bergson's thought.

While young Illich may not have been aware of this specific part of Fromm's theoretical framework, he was most certainly familiar with much of neo-humanistic and *kulturkritisch* thought, both in the Old and in the New World (this was for instance undoubtedly true as far as Lewis Mumford's work was concerned).[27] Indeed, it could be argued that in Illich's eyes this kind of thinking might even have had a family air about it, as it were: a proper analysis of the intellectual life of his mother Ellen Rose could prove this beyond all reasonable doubt.[28] Be that as it may, many of the central tenets in Illich's preaching drew heavily on the thinking briefly summarised above. One could mention for instance Illich's later preoccupation with the processes that led to institutional

24 Fromm, Erich, (1941). *Escape from Freedom*. New York – Toronto: Rinehart & Co.

25 Fromm, Erich, (1947). *Man for Himself. An inquiry Into the Psychology of Ethics*. New York: Rinehart.

26 Fromm, Erich, (1950). *Psychoanalysis and Religion*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

27 Mumford, Lewis, (1946). *Values for Survival. Essays, Addresses and Letters on Politics and Education*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. The author sent this book to Illich's mother in Florence in the early months of 1947.

28 An attempt at a short introduction to Ellen Rose 'Maexie' Regenstreif Illich (1901-1965) is to be found in Fabio Milana's 'Nota al testo' (see Illich, Ivan (2013). *Genere. Per una critica storica dell'uguaglianza*. Edited by Fabio Milana. Vicenza: Neri Pozza, pp. 239-243). The same text has also been published in English as 'Gender. Notes to the Text' in *The International Journal of Illich's Studies* (V, 1, 2016, pp. 79-84).

rigidity, and his very call for a necessary 'institutional revolution'; at a different level, one could also add his ecclesiology divided between a Neuter and a Feminine Church, the latter of which he identified with a welcoming open attitude to surprise (the Surprising One, *i.e.* the Spirit). Finally, one could mention his re-reading of the Parable of the Good Samaritan, which by his own account he began to develop as early as his Puerto Rican years,[29] in terms of the contrast between envisaging charity as the competence of specialised agencies and seeing it as an individual's free choice dictated by the contingency at hand.

III. In Toynbee's perspective, preventing Western-Christian civilisation from becoming too rigid was a necessary step: it had already entered its 'imperial' (and therefore pre-terminal) phase, and it was witnessing the inevitable polarisation between cosmopolitical elites on the one hand, and a proletariat that was both 'internal' and 'external' on the other. However, what made that need so urgent was the fact, among many others, that all those actors – especially *class* and *war*, which regularly brought about innovation cycles – were now operating on a world stage that was teaming with atomic arsenals, which was all set to perform the last, catastrophic act in the history of the whole of mankind. It was therefore indispensable to take advantage of the regular, nefarious occurrences which historiosophy had exposed, and to direct all developing processes into new channels leading to fresh forms of contact and interaction between cultures. Since the world's progressive Westernization was seemingly driven by a blind,

29 He made a note to this effect in his 'Commentary' (see McMahon, Bea (ed.), (1989). *Fox-Sight. Telling the Vision of Robert J. Fox.* Huntington (IN): Our Sunday Visitor, pp. 154-160). It is now also available in the collection which was published after Illich's death (see Borremans & Samuel, 2018: 168-174; see moreover Part V below). In Italy it was edited by Fabio Milana, and it was published as 'Con gli occhi aperti sulla vita' in the *Il Regno - Attualità* magazine (20/2012, pp. 675-680).

haphazard necessity that was utterly incapable of achieving any real kind of *integration*, it was indispensable for creative minorities on both sides (or on all five sides, if Toynbee's list of still-extant civilisations was taken into consideration) to develop converging avenues of cross-fertilisation on the basis of their authentic vital cores (which Toynbee believed to be religious in nature) and of mutual acknowledgement.[30] It has to be borne in mind that Father Illich's precocious sensitivity to interculturality did not only draw nourishment from his own biographical roots, but also blossomed on a ground made fertile by this kind of analysis. From his unplanned acquaintance with Puerto Rican immigrants in East Harlem less than two months after defending his dissertation, to his activities of many years' standing on the threshold of the Latin American continent, the main feature of his analysis was always the process of *change* which affected, and indeed could not help affecting, the universes that came in contact, but which should have rather done so *both ways*. The civilisation that suddenly began to undergo that process should take the future of its development in its own hands, and should evaluate the most suitable technical and political *alternativas* to the hegemonic model; the other one, the aggressor with a benign face, should give up all deception and deceit, take stock of its own non-universality, and rise up to the challenge posed by a seemingly "backward" or "inferior" interlocutor.[31] An exemplary laboratory in this sense, which both history and geography had made available, was the Catholic Church: in the

30 On these topics see Tagliaferri, Teodoro, (2002). *Storia ecumenica. Materiali per lo studio dell'opera di Toynbee*. Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino; and Maggioni, Luca, *'Commonwealth of Man o Civitas Dei? Toynbee e la ricerca della pace'*. In: Leonardi, Federico, & Maggioni, Luca (eds.), *Arnold J. Toynbee. Il mondo oltre le civiltà.* Milan: Unicopli, pp. 125-143.

31 His 1969 essay 'Planned Poverty: The End Result of Technical Assistance', which he subsequently included in *Celebration of Awareness* (see also Part I below), provides the best overview of this specific aspect of his thought.

context of this dual process, it was called upon to rediscover the *missionary* nature of its role in history.

At the inception of Illich's ministry in New York when he first came across the "scandal" of the Puerto Rican Catholics left without adequate spiritual care, the relevant archdiocese was already trying to deal with the problem, as were the Churches affected by the same issue, or very similar ones, in other parts of the US:[32] there is consequently no need to lend credence to any far-fetched account on the matter. Of course, Illich's contribution to the improvement of pastoral practices, particularly at a linguistic and cultural level, must have been of the utmost importance, if it is considered that both he and his partner, Joseph Fitzpatrick S.J., have been justifiably seen (at least for heuristic purposes) as 'Gramsci's organic intellectuals', in consideration of their ability to take root in a subordinate community and to liaison with the dominant institution, in this case the Catholic Church in New York.[33] Yet what really made Father Illich stand out as opposed to his partner was his early awareness that those transitioning believers constituted a unique opportunity to renew the local Catholic Church as a whole. In a landscape that *Exsul familia* (1952) still envisaged as made up of national parishes and prelacies *nullius* to be regulated accordingly,[34] the proposal put forward by this re-

32 Even without taking into account the areas which were affected by immigration from Mexico, this point can be easily gleaned from the acts of the conference held in San Juan in April 1955, which Illich was instrumental in organising (see Ferree, William, & Fitzpatrick, Joseph P. SJ., & Illich, John D. (eds.), (1956). *Report on the First Conference on the Spiritual Care of Puerto Rican Migrants*. New York: Office of the Coordinator of Spanish-American Catholic Action; and also Sondeos 74, published by CIDOC in Cuernavaca in 1970).

33 See Diaz-Stevens, Ana Maria, (1993). *Oxcart Catholicism on Fifth Avenue. The Impact of the Puerto Rican Migration upon the Archdiocese of New York*. Notre Dame (IN) – London: University of Notre Dame Press, pp. 117-145. Indeed, after an in-depth analysis, the author of this excellent piece of research fell nonetheless short of labelling the two priests as 'organic intellectuals' (of course in a sociological perspective, rather than in a political one).

34 See Pope Pius XII's Apostolic Constitution *Exsul familia, De spirituali migrantium*

markable newcomer was to radically overhaul territorial parishes, in order to turn them into an integrated community of various people engaged in an open dialogue with one another. It was not just a matter of favouring the Catholic immigrants' Americanisation, a task traditionally fulfilled by the Catholic Church to which Cardinal Spellman was anxious to contribute: it was about de-ethnicising the Church, decentralising it from within, and rearranging its position within the framework of its own history. It was thus that Illich began to affect the process of that flight "from the ghetto" which was already being felt by the more mature brand of US Catholicism: the exodus from that kind of 'counterculture' or 'alternative society' which reproduced within the US Catholic Church, on a much larger scale, the defensive and extra-territorial configuration of the "national parish", including the conditioned reflex of the unnuanced patriotism that had emerged as a form of compensation. Already in one of his earliest texts, which he still published under a pseudonym, the concepts of 'parish' and 'territory' were portrayed as having a mutual relationship of ideal co-extensiveness and material distinctness, a situation which demanded the courage of 'razing the bastions' and of venturing out into a pluralistic landscape as a missionary minority;[35] in this sense, Illich's timely alertness to John Courtney Murray's considerations on these issues is rather telling.[36]

In a symmetrical perspective, it is remarkable that one of the first *Reports* issued between 1962 and 1967 by the *Center for Intercultural Formation* which Illich directed in Cuernavaca (its subtitle, 'Cultures, the Church and the Amer-

cura, 1st August 1952, especially Title II.

35 For this text, 'The American Parish', see Part V below.

36 John Courtney Murray S.J. (1904-1967) was the courageous theologist of political democracy and religious pluralism; he was instrumental in the elaboration of the Second Vatican Council's *Dignitatis Humanae* Declaration on religious freedom, dated to 7th December 1965. On his relationship with Illich, see below.

icas', is worth noting) should revive Father Luis Segundo S.J.'s provocation, which predicted the sudden 'end of Christendom' in Latin America and its hypothetical replacement by a new form of *Cristianismo*.[37] If it is true that on the one hand the Church in the US was both locked up in the fortress of its charitable and financial institutions, and, at least politically, *disestablished* then, on the other hand its Latin American counterpart had, despite its lack of staff and resources, traditionally played a key role throughout the continent supporting regimes, compounding the various national identities, and perpetuating the various ruling classes thanks to the capillary presence of its educational system. Illich believed, as Segundo did, that the incipient process of modernisation would deliver the Latin American Church from the shackles of the role in which the continent's colonial past had cast it, thereby giving it the chance to go back to Gospel's original message. It was no longer a matter of profiting from political support or luring in financial resources from abroad (especially from North America and Europe) merely to preserve a position of power which was *de facto* already compromised; it was rather about giving up that position altogether, in order to bear witness to the Gospel from a position of weakness, for that was exactly the meaning of the theological concept 'a Church of the poor' which was then being debated by the Second Vatican Council. Right from his first journey to Puerto Rico, however, Illich also had the opportunity to take stock of the characteristic features of the Latin American Churches, such as their structural lack of priests and the autonomous wealth of people's religious life. These features, he maintained, could potentially act as a prophetic warning for the more "af-

37 Segundo, Luís S.J., (1962). 'The passage to pluralism in Latina America.' *Cif Reports* I, 7 (December), later also in *Cidoc Cuaderno* 36, pp. 1/8-15; Segundo, Luís S.J., (1963). 'The future of "Cristianismo" in Latin America.' *Cif Reports* II, 2 (May), later also in *Cidoc Cuaderno* 37, pp. 2/18-29.

fluent" US Churches: that virtuous exchange was exactly what was meant by the 'wedding of contrasting cultures' which the very first issues of the *CIF Reports* hoped would play in favour of the universal Church.[38] The fact that Illich conceived *The Vanishing Clergyman* in 1959, in the years when he was still in Puerto Rico, and right before the 1960 conflict with the island's bishops over the patronage they granted to the *Partido de Acción Cristiana*, shows that at the end of the 1950s the theoretical and practical perspective outlined above – a movement of cross-fertilisation of the opposites that was 'able to procreate a Church of the future' – had already entered its mature phase, and was ready to be tested in the tumultuous scenarios which the new decade was to inaugurate.

IV. If it is agreed that the one outlined above was indeed the "grammar" underlying Illich's thinking and actions in the period under consideration, and especially in the ten years between 1955 and 1965, it may be useful to examine those years more closely, in order to provide a more precise contextualisation of a few key-passages within them. Illich's departure from Puerto Rico, for instance, was undoubtedly occasioned by the fact that he dared to disavow the local bishops' actions[39]

38 'How many have come to realize that in the Americas, as well as in many other areas of the world and of life, the Church will be served best by an interaction of values and an exchange of ideas that reveal the purity of our Faith! Some non-essentials must be forfeited on both sides, but these times demand a wedding of the best aspects of contrasting cultures. Need it be pointed out here that this means sacrifice and that sacrifice hurts? In how many cases must we strip ourselves bare of all but essentials in order to build a new future?' See *CIF Reports* I, 1 (April 1962), later also in *CIDOC Cuaderno* 36, pp. 1/4-5. Rosa Bruno-Jofré e Jon Igelmo Zaldívar's admittedly well-documented essay did however not perceive this dynamic aspect of interchange and reciprocity in Illich's proposal. The same aspect was on the other hand properly understood and highlighted, albeit within a different contextualising framework and with references to slightly later texts, by Simon Ravenscroft (see Ravenscroft Simon, (2016). 'Modernity and the economics of gift and charity: on Ivan Illich's critique of abstract philanthropy.' *Telos* 174 (Spring). especially pp. 158-162).

39 Whenever this episode is discussed, it is usually not taken into consideration that

even though he was a mere guest in the diocese; nonetheless, there were other circumstances which may have induced him to display less patience and prudence than usual. Indeed, although Illich had already established in Puerto Rico a training centre for all religious staff heading to South America on missionary duty, that island eventually turned out to be unsuited to a 'wedding of cultures', as it was termed a few years later. 'We discovered that many Latin Americans saw Puerto Rico as a "mini-Gringo-land," since it was an American possession, and they were not disposed to seeing it as a bridge between the two areas', Fitzpatrick stated as the privileged witness, albeit from the side-lines, of a joint project which convinced Illich to accept the position of prorector at the Catholic University in Ponce as early as 1956.[40] This realisation, which demanded a change of strategy, was in all likelihood the outcome of a 'study trip' which Illich took south of the Equator between February and April 1960 (therefore well before the crisis with

the elections for Puerto Rico's governor on 8th November 1960 coincided with that year's US presidential elections, for which the Catholic John Fitzgerald Kennedy was running. The Church of Rome's potential interference was a hotly debated topic in the electoral campaign, to the extent that even US bishops had to disavow their Puerto Rican colleagues; Cardinal Spellman himself, the "American Pope", who was most certainly not a supporter of the Democrat Kennedy, had to publicly deny that failure to obey the Puerto Rican bishops' voting instructions constituted 'a sin of disobedience' (see Silk, Mark, (1989). *Spiritual Politics: Religion and America Since World War II*. New York: Simon & Schuster, pp. 117 ff.). Illich's actions were not as calculated but were in fact prompted by his deep-seated aversion to the Church's direct meddling in political and electoral matters, which he had probably developed in Italy in the 1940s. In a letter he addressed to the rector of Collegio Capranica on 7th November 1961 he wrote: 'It was not easy for me to give up all my dreams and, together with them, an institute I had helped to set up: that university could already boast 6,000 students, and subsidiary centres had already been planned in seven countries. For the Church's own good I was forced to deny my cooperation to an enterprise which later went to the dogs – the Christian Action Party. Thank God I managed to keep out of politics.' (No further collocation references will be supplied in this essay on this archival document and on a few others quoted in the text: it is hoped it may be possible to provide a more comprehensive and thorough study of them in the future).

40 Fitzpatrick, Joseph P., (1996). *The Stranger is Our Own, Reflections on the journey of Puerto Rican Migrants*. Kansas City: Sheed & Wards, p. 23.

the Puerto Rican bishops). [41] That trip has become legendary, but very little is in fact known about it; what can be said with any certainty is that Illich managed to set up a first network of intellectual and ecclesiastical contacts (especially among the leaders that were most closely associated with the experience of the JOC, the *Jeunesse ouvrière chrétienne*)[42] that would soon provide the support he needed for his new adventure, also thanks to the mediation and the list of contacts provided by Maritain.[43] Both this sudden expansion of Illich's horizons and the reorganisation of his priorities, nonetheless, have also to be seen in light of the formidable acceleration which the local and global context experienced in the closing years of the 1950s, a decade which had already been marked by pronounced economic and political dynamism. To mention only two of many momentous turning points, it may be recalled that in January 1959 alone the Cuban revolution achieved its final victory and the newly appointed Pope John XXIII unexpectedly announced the Catholic Church's incoming Ecumenic Council. Things and consciences were entering an irrevocable state of mobilisation, and *change* was more than ever the order of the day. While the Jesuit sociologists at the *Centro Bellarmino* (*i.e.* Renato Poblete and Luis Segundo) and at Desal (*i.e.* Roger Vekemans) in Santiago de Chile were beginning to grasp the imminence of a revolution which they tried to cast as Christian, the Churches in the Northern Hemisphere and the Roman Curia were preparing a "missionary crusade" for

41 'I was sent away on a study trip for almost three months' Illich informed Monsignor Cesare Federici, the rector of *Collegio Capranica*, in the same letter mentioned above. His "mission" probably concerned the planned 'subsidiary centres in 7 countries'. Since Illich related that trip in a letter he sent to Jacques Maritain on 19th May 1960, the chronological reconstruction proposed here appears to be a fairly reasonable inference.

42 Scatena, Silvia, (2008). *In populo pauperum. La Chiesa latinoamericana dal Concilio a Medellín (1962-1968)*. Bologna: Il Mulino, pp. 34-37, 40-42; Scatena, Silvia, (2008). *La teologia della liberazione in America Latina*. Rome: Carocci, pp. 10-13.

43 As stated in the above-mentioned letter to Jacques Maritain.

Latin America: indeed, both the first inter-American meeting of the bishops' representatives and the setting-up of a Latin American Bureau (LAB) within the US Church took place in November 1959, while the *Papal Volunteers for Latin America* (PAVLA), an initiative that called for the mobilisation of US Catholic laity, was launched in May 1960. Illich had already become familiar with the apostolic activity carried out by secular Catholics in his New York years, and possessed moreover excellent credentials thanks to the experience he had accumulated at the Centre in Ponce by training the clergy that operated among Puerto Rican immigrants: after a forced short spell in New York, he was appointed trainer for the recruits bound for Latin America by a delicate institutional network involving his own Archdiocese, Father Fitzpatrick's Fordham University, and LAB (which was then directed by Father John Considine M.M., the great director of the entire missionary operation). A journey through the Caribbean in October and November 1960 subsequently convinced Illich to choose as the main seat of his new activity Cuernavaca, a city in Central Mexico that was fairly well-known to elite tourism: this aspect potentially made it quite appealing to the prospective user base of Illich's centre, and at the same time it eliminated the risk of suddenly wreaking havoc on the area's traditional culture. An additional element may have also been the fact that, in a country marked by a strict separation between Church and State, the local episcopate was held by Bishop Sergio Méndez-Arceo, who was both aware of "change" and open to it.[44] In the summer of 1961, when the first training course for 62 aspiring missionaries was already underway at the recently-inaugurated CIF, the scenario then changed radically: on

44 See Hartch, 2015: 19-23. On Méndez Arceo and the Cuernavaca diocese in the 1960, as well as on Illich's presence there, Raniero La Valle shot an important documentary, *Cuernavaca, La sposa bella*, that was broadcast by the Italian state television on Holy Thursday, the 11th of April 1968; it was subsequently published in book form by Vicenza's La Locusta publishing house in 1969.

17th August, as the heads of state of both hemispheres signed the programme of Inter-American cooperation known as *Alliance for Progress* in Montevideo, the Papal Nuncio officially presented at the Catholic University of Notre Dame the Holy See's proposal to send a tenth of the staff of all male and female religious orders to Latin America within ten years.[45] Ten days later Washington saw off the first 55 volunteers from the *Peace Corps*, which had just been created by will of the newly-elected US President John F. Kennedy, and for which Father Considine acted as adviser himself. When the *CIF Reports* predicted the 'wedding of contrasting cultures' in their first issue in the spring of 1962, they could no longer overlook the fact that the wedding feast was going to be unusually crowded and rowdy.

V. As mentioned above, the *CIF Reports* were aimed at an English-speaking readership, and tried to spread reliable and up-to-date information on Latin America's political and religious context to the First World. In truth, however, CIF's underlying *raison d'être* was in fact the transfer of clerical and secular people, programmes and resources in the opposite direction, along a North-South axis, in order to provide aspiring missionaries with a complete linguistic, cultural and spiritual training; it was precisely on that domain that Monsignor Illich's action immediately focused, in a fashion that stood out as original and disruptive right from the outset.[46] Indeed, Illich

45 The concurrence of these events was remarked upon by Bruno-Jofré & Zaldívar (2016: 574).

46 *Time Magazine* vividly reported on this on 27th October 1961, at the time of the inauguration of a second training course at CIF (*Boot Camp for Urbanites*). Illich's reply was interesting: 'Your article on the Center of Intercultural Formation in Cuernavaca [Oct. 27] captured much of the spirit of our endeavor. However, lest there be any confusion, I should like to point out that this is not an isolated, independent activity run as an ecclesiastical one-man show but is a project endorsed by the U.S. and Latin American hierarchies, supported by the Conference of Major Religious Superiors and directed by a board headed by the president of Fordham University. / May I also, gently

believed missionaries to be the juncture between two worlds, each of which they knew from within, but from both of which they were excluded; experiencing such a condition thus demanded a spiritual and intellectual temperament that had to be well-nigh exceptional. If one examines his first statement on missions, which dates back to his years in Puerto Rico,[47] one may notice two features of his training proposal that were constantly at odds with one another. On the one hand there was the 'self-emptying' process, the kenosis which missionaries, in imitation of the *Logos*, were required to undergo in order to rise to their calling and become one with their new host population; on the other, the open-ended nature of that process, as missionaries could not, and should not, stop being who they were, namely people who were still firmly rooted in a well-defined culture of origin despite having given it up. That is why young Illich described missions not just as a process of inculturation (although this word was first coined in the same period, it would only gain currency twenty years later), but rather as one of *interculturation*, or, to be more precise, one in which a Church that was in its own way already incultured met 'a new world which now bec[ame] Christian or now return[ed] to Christ'. Everything about these early formulations is noteworthy. First, the mission's prototype was the Incarnation of the Word, that is to say, God himself was the first mission mobiliser (a principle which was first developed by Karl Barth and taken up by the International Missionary Council at the congress held in Willingen in 1952, but which

but firmly, correct a few other items: I have never "spoken out" against any bishop of the church; my theology is much better than the condensed and out-of-context quotes at the end of the article would indicate; and never have I been a "Yankee-hater"—even though my mother's grandfather happens to have been a Texan' (see 'Gently but Firmly', *Time Magazine*, 24th November 1961).

47 It is *Missionary Poverty*, which has been reprinted many times; see also Part III below.

at the time was still essentially alien to Catholic theology).[48] Secondly, the Word did by no means stop being what it was once it was hollowed out: despite becoming human, it still preserved its ontological difference. Thirdly, the fact that the Word 'became man, Jew, Roman subject' was the *analogatum princeps*, so to speak, of every missionary endeavour, which was in itself unrepeatable; there could therefore be no missions to the Jews.[49] Fourthly, every mission to the Gentiles echoed St. Paul's 'I am made all things to all men': it involved painful and endless self-denial, which Illich identified in part with St. Ignatius's 'indifference', and in part with the beatitude of the 'poor in spirit',[50] and which could enable a portion of mankind to lend new flesh to the Word. Fifthly, historically sequenced incarnations, which were culturally determined, had nonetheless to remain accessible to new believers, and represented for them something akin to a right of citizenship in the "Catholic world"; missionaries, for their part, had to

48 Illich probably borrowed it from Father Thomas Ohm OSB, with whose texts he was very familiar, even though the latter's missiological summary, *Machet zu Jüngern alle Völker* (issued by Freiburg i.B.'s Wewel publishing house) dated to 1962 (see Sievernich, Michael, (2012). *La missione cristiana, Storia e presente*. Brescia: Queriniana, pp. 208-209). Prompts in the same direction could have also been provided by other writers with whom Illich was acquainted, such as Jean Daniélou (see Daniélou, Jean, (1946). *Le mystère du salut des nations*. Paris: Seuil, Paris) and Charles Journet, (see Journet, Charles, (1951). *L'Église du Verbe incarné. Essai de théologie spéculative*. Paris: Desclée de Brouwer; see also Colzani, Gianni, (2010). *Missiologia contemporanea. Il cammino evangelico delle Chiese, 1945-2007*. Cinisello Balsamo: San Paolo, pp. 43 and 57). Beyond these, one should also take into consideration Henri De Lubac's pages on *adaptation*, among many others (see De Lubac, Henri, (1938). *Catholicisme, Les aspects sociaux du dogme*. Paris: Cerf, pp. 248-251).

49 One should however bear in mind Pope Benedict XVI's partially opposite view: see the lecture *Faith, Reason and the University. Memories and reflections*, XIV, http://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2006/september/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20060912_university-regensburg.html

50 This was suggested by Albert Auer (see Auer, Albert, (1947). *Leidenstheologie des Mittelalters*. Salzburg: Jgonta Verlag). Illich was initiated to St. Ignatius's spirituality as early as his first spiritual exercises in the autumn of 1945; his *partnership* with Father Fitzpatrick and the expressions of solidarity he regularly received from the weekly paper *America* owned by the US Society of Jesus, as well as from society at large, cannot possibly be considered a mere coincidence.

be able to identify the truly "universal" elements within the tradition, be it specific or shared, in order to make them available to the new members of the Church.

Those principles would come to a more mature enunciation in the years between 1961 and 1964, not by means of substantial corrections, but rather of a more precise and complex wording. A review of those later formulations shows first and foremost a convergence between ecclesiology and missiology. The latter was presented as 'the theology of Church development', 'the humanly ever new Church': in other words, right from its inception on the day of Pentecost, the intrinsic nature of the Church was a fundamentally missionary one, which enabled it to be one and multiple across time and space. For its part, the Church took centre stage in Illich's "missionary ecclesiology", thanks to the constant process of evolution that relentlessly turned it into a novelty and a *surprise* (the Church as She, as mentioned above). It was portrayed as a movement of endless translation and 'interculturation', 'the social continuation of Incarnation': the sacrament of Christ as the 'ultimate sacrament of God'. Since the Revelation was aimed at mankind, it manifested itself to them (and hid from them) through signs that needed to be understood, accepted, transmitted, and reinvented throughout the historical existence of the Word of God. To the extent that the latter could split from the equally eternal Silence (even though it was exactly by listening to that Silence that missionary spirituality could be kindled),[51] it could be communicated through a plurality of cultures, and the ensuing multi-cultural concert constituted 'the global divine liturgy', 'when all peoples will be able to say Amen and Alleluia in their own languages'.[52]

51 As explained in *Missionary Silence*, dating to the 1960-1961 period; see Part I below, under the title *The Eloquence of Silence*.

52 These passages were taken from *Mission and Midwifery*. Part 2. Selection and Formation of the Missioner. See also Part III below.

At the same time, it is in those texts that Illich distanced himself more clearly from the "Enlightenment paradigm" which had affected missionary culture in colonial times. This may of course be noticed in those passages which applied secular categories drawn from human sciences (such as psychology, sociology, political science) to the Church and the missions, with an alienating and desacralizing effect; or indeed in Illich's list of counter-models for the aspiring missionary, which culminated with the figure of the US *conquistador*. Yet it becomes even more evident where he stressed the uniqueness and non-repeatability of the emergence of a local Church from a pre-existing culture that was either unaware of Christ or had forgotten Him: a new birth for the delivery of which missionaries were called upon to act as midwives. This process summarised and discarded codified tropes of the missiological tradition such as the *conversio animarum* (which was usually assessed in statistical terms) and the *plantatio Ecclesiae* (at least as far as its legal status was concerned) in favour of a deeper, more authentic entrenchment in the surrounding community on the Church's part: '*die Errichtung der Kirche im Gemüt, in der Vorstellungswelt, in den Wünschen und Träumen einer Gemeinschaft, die dieser Errichtung mittels der ihr eigenen Worte und Gebärden Ausdruck verleiht*.' ('The establishment of the Church in the soul, in the imagery, in the wishes and the dreams of a community which by means of its own words and deeds gives expression to that same process').[53] He saw that new birth as a uniquely creative event for which missionaries acted as catalysts, without being its "authors" and "owners" in any possible way: this interpretation moved far beyond the *accommodation* model for which the most self-aware Catholic missiologists had settled at the time. If one were to consult what was in many ways a rather canonical work on missionary anthropology at the

53 *Principles for the Training of Missionaries* (*Summary*); see Part VI.

time, namely *The Church and Cultures* (1963) by Father Louis Luzbetak, one of CIF's associates in its initial phase (he was a Divine Word Missionary, as were the Viennese priests who initiated Illich to Christianity),[54] one would discover that every page displayed a sensitivity and preoccupations that were akin to Illich's, and even included direct quotes from him. At the same time, however, Luzbetak envisaged the "adaptation" process as essentially bestowed from above, or else as something that could at most be negotiated in a *quasi*-diplomatic fashion between two very distinct partners: they could possibly meet at half way, but under no circumstances could the Church and each of the cultures involved be reborn from one another, with all the intercultural and inter-ecclesial consequences that may be expected.[55] The complete change of perspectives initiated by Illich would find its way into Lutzbetak's work only in its second edition, published twenty five years after the first,[56] at a time when even the Magisterium had

54 The St. Gabriel seminary located in Mödling near Vienna was run by the *Societas Verbi Divini*, a missionary congregation that one of the seminary's residents, Father Wilhelm Schmidt (1868-1954), made renowned thanks to his studies on ethnology and the history of religion. The *Anthropos* magazine which he subsequently established there spread the research centre's reputation throughout Europe, and he also set up a museum of missionary ethnography that must have surely been known to the Illich-Regenstreif family. Moreover, it may be pointed out that the parish of St. Ulrich in which Illich received his first sacraments was also run by the same order; finally, Father Wilbert Wagner (1912-2006), who was one of Illich's closest collaborators, at least during CIF's initial period, and who was responsible for the training courses in Cuernavaca until the end of 1964, was also a Divine Word Missionary.

55 See Luzbetak, Louis J. SVD, (1963). *The Church and Cultures. An Applied Anthropology for the Religious Worker*, Techny (Il): Divine Word Publications. He proposed the following definition of *accommodation*: 'The Church's respectful, cautious, scientifically and theologically appropriate adjustment to the local culture as regards attitudes, behaviour, and the practical apostolic approach. 'Church' here designates the mission's religious staff, as well as the authorities to whom the apostolic work has been entrusted' (*ibid.*, p. 341). He also recalled Illich's conception of missionary spirituality, which his text from 1958 defined in terms of humility and poverty of spirit (*ibid.*, p. 8).

56 See Chapter 3 ('Mission Models') in Luzbetak, Louis J. SVD, (1988). *The Church and Cultures. New Perspectives in Missiological Anthropology*. Maryknoll (NY): Orbis Book, pp. 64 ff, especially where the author illustrated his 'contextual' model, which he variously termed '*incarnational*' or '*inculturational*' (pp. 68-83).

long accepted it.[57] According to Illich's premonitory intuition, missionaries had to become accustomed 'to growing respect for the uniqueness of each people, the mysterious complexity and otherness of each community', so that the latter might '[find] their way to Christ, [build] their roads to him, led by their own people in the direction they [chose]'. Furthermore, missionaries had to grow together with their '*apostoliche Veranwortlichkeit gegenüber [ihrem] eigenen Herkunftslande*' ('their apostolic duty towards their own country of origin'), and relay back to it those 'missionary concepts'[58] that can only develop along the Church's frontiers: these were to eventually guide the Church to a new era in its history rather than to a new land of conquest, *i.e.* to a *reform*. As has been anticipated, these 'missionary concepts' included the necessary reassessment of the clergy's role in the Church and of the rules that regulated sacramental practice. It is an established fact that Illich addressed these issues once again in 1962 during his hospitalisation in Frankfurt; when they were formulated explicitly and in full in 1967, they caused a degree of alarm in the Catholic hierarchy like no other action or attitude of his had ever done before.

VI. It should nonetheless be noted that Illich's missiological thought in the years that acted as a watershed between the 1950s and the 1960s was in fundamental agreement with the Holy See's main concerns on the matter. It is a well-known fact that from Benedict XV's papacy onwards (1914-1922) the Vatican began to try to get rid of all the Eurocentric and (more or less) openly racist connotations that had previously defined missions as traditionally understood; the process

57 See Pope John Paul II's Apostolic Exhortation *Catechesi tradendae*, Rome, 1st October 1979, n. 53; see also his Encyclical *Redemptoris missio*, Rome, 7th December 1990, nn. 52-54.

58 *Mission and Midwifery*. Part 1. Missionary Formation.

gained even greater momentum during Pope Pius XII's pontificate (1939-1958), at a time when decolonisation was in full sway. The focus now switched to the urgency of establishing, in the territories that were still targeted by the missions, local Churches under the direction of the area's clergy and hierarchy, to overcome the growing hostility caused by the presence of Western agents in recently independent countries. Of course, such a policy was a source of puzzlement and even bewilderment among those orders and congregations that had traditionally been involved in missionary activities, and which had their very *raison d'être* in their presence, work, and ecclesiastical leadership on the ground. Even the appeal in favour of Africa made by Pope Pius XII in his 1957 *Fidei donum*, which encouraged the temporary loan of members of the secular clergy to accelerate the pace of the local Churches' empowerment, could be read as a sort of marginalisation of the missionary calling itself.[59] Whether due to factors that were either external or internal to the Church, or to a combination of both, the missionary movement was now forced to take a step back to meditate (sometimes in harsh, self-critical terms) on its past acquiescence with the imperialist mentality; it consequently entered a period of impasse, which the turbulent 1960s eventually radicalised even further. The Protestant world became aware of this trend earlier thanks to its characteristic ecclesiastical and geopolitical dynamism, and already in 1964 there were books in circulation sporting telling titles such as John Carden's *The Ugly Missionary* or James Scherer's *Missionary, Go Home!*, among other similar ones. The crisis soon came to affect also the Church's role in the world and the way in which it was pursued, as the conferences held by the

59 Italy has been accounted for in the excellent documentation gathered by Mauro Forno (see Forno, Mauro, (2017). *Le culture degli altri. Il mondo delle missioni e la decolonizzazione*. Roma: Carocci).

Ecumenical Council in Geneva (1966), Uppsala (1968), and Bangkok (1973) clearly showed; it eventually led to the shocking proposal of a "moratorium on missions" put forward by African and Asian Church leaders.[60] Despite the changes introduced by the Vatican Council, or perhaps just because of them, the realisation of this state of affairs was even more sudden and traumatic on the Catholic side. The provocatory speech which Illich delivered at the CICOP meeting in January 1967 has often been mentioned;[61] much less remembered is the one given by Father Ronan Hoffman OFM in April 1967, in which the only academically accredited missiologist still active in the US disconcerted the Catholic students' Mission Crusade by declaring that the missions' era had providentially been brought to a conclusion.[62] In 1969 thirty missionary congregations met in Rome to discuss *Perché le missioni?* ('Why missions?') for the first time;[63] the synod held by Catholic Germans in Würzburg between 1971 and 1975 also addressed the same question, starting from the premise that it was surrounded by a widely acknowledged feeling of *Unbehagen* (unease). The 1975 Papal document which introduced a new approach to the whole subject, *Evangelii nuntiandi*, did away with a long-codified vocabulary right from its very title: the nouns 'missions' and 'missionaries' were employed not more than twice in the text's 82 paragraphs, and a simple comparison with the *Evangelii praecones* issued by Pope Pius XII twenty-five years earlier is enough to convey the full ex-

60 Bevans, Stephen B., & Schroeder, Roger P., (2004). *Constants in Context. Theology of Missions for Today*. Maryknoll (NY): Orbis Books, pp. 251-253.

61 It is the well-known *Seamy Side of Charity*, which may be found in Part I.

62 Endres, David J. (2010). *American Crusade. Catholic Youth on the World Mission Movement from World War I through Vatican II*. Eugene (OR): Pickwick, pp. 137-138.

63 SEDOS (Service of Documentation and Study on the Global Mission), (1970). *Perché le missioni? Teologia della missione: studi e dibattiti*. Bologna - Milano - Torino: Nigrizia - PIM E - EMC. Available in English as SEDOS, (1972). *Foundations of Mission Theology*. Maryknoll (NY): Orbis Book.

tent of the changes involved. Although Illich's voice had not directly interfered in this debate for years, it is still remarkable that the missiology which he developed in his youth should make a comeback in the mid-1970s, right at the time when missionary thought was being radically renovated: indeed, in 1974 the historical magazine of the Pontifical Institute for Foreign Missions published his 1958 *Missionary Poverty* in Italian for the first time. Even more peculiar is the fact that a Rhodesian Catholic publisher[64] should resume the publication of his *Mission and Midwifery* (1962-1964) in the same year: thanks to this, the text enjoyed a reasonably wide circulation in Africa (and hence also in Europe and the US), and fifteen years later it was included as exemplary in the South-African theologian David Bosch's study on the evolution of the missionary paradigm, a standard reference on the subject to this day.[65]

The case of Latin America was clearly a special one: there the 'missionary crusade' was supposed to operate in what was still the Catholic continent *par excellence*, despite a succession of threats from liberal-masonic infiltrations, Protestant activism, and more recently the people's fascination with Fidel Castro. Strictly speaking, it was not a matter of converting souls or establishing a Church there; it was rather about stabilizing the extant one and guaranteeing adequate pastoral care for the faithful, since the main "issue" in Latin America was, as mentioned above, the dearth of priests, and by extension of the structures and the "services" on the

64 It was Mambo Press, based in Gwelo (modern-day Gweru, Zimbabwe) directed at the time by Father Albert Plangger from the Bethlehem Mission Society. It is not known which channels or intermediaries may have led to this edition, which bore the subheading *Essays on Missionary Formation*.

65 See Bosch, David J., (1991). *Transforming Mission. Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*. Maryknoll (NY): Orbis Book, p. 505, especially where the author illustrates the intertwined nature of ecclesiology and missiology, on the basis of the Second Vatican Council's principle that 'The pilgrim Church is missionary by her very nature'.

territory. In truth, however, this state of affairs did not really change much about the Holy See's approach. If one carefully examines the already-mentioned speech given by Monsignor Casaroli at the conference held by the Superiors General of the religious orders at the Catholic University of Notre Dame in 1961, it will be noticed that Pope John XXIII's *long-term program* to solve Latin America's 'basic problems' envisaged the Church's self-sufficiency as its ultimate goal; the subsidiary '*ten-year plan*' devised for its implementation by Cardinal Samorè, the President of the Pontifical Commission for Latin America, proposed the extraordinary effort of temporarily transferring there, ideally, 10 per cent of all religious staff.[66] Of course, they were expected to be non-specialised and without either a missionary calling or training, and were to be added to the general mobilisation of an even less trained laity; the latter was moreover supposed to be involved only for short periods (three years was the longest spell one could expect to serve at Pavla, while the period of engagement in the various students' crusades lasted much less), and the *ten-per-cent* watchword was to be unofficially spread among the diocesan clergy. All this was meant to be spurred on by apostolic and patriotic zeal (the "Two Johns", the Pope and the US President, were alleged to hold the world's destiny in their hands at the time), with no real coordination whatsoever, no previous knowledge of the areas, however minimal, and no trace of even remotely critical insight into the stake-

66 See the *Appeal of the Pontifical Commission to North American Superiors. Address of Monsignor Agostino Casaroli, August 17, 1961*. In: Costello, Gerald M., (1979). *Mission to Latin America. The Successes and Failures of a Twentieth Century Crusade.* Maryknoll (NY): Orbis Books, pp. 273-282, especially pp. 279 e 281. See also Pope John XXIII's two speeches, *Ai Cardinali, Arcivescovi e Vescovi partecipanti alla III riunione del "Consiglio episcopale latino-americano"*, 15th November 1958 («Acta Apostolicae Sedis L, 1958, pp. 997-1005), and *Ai Superiori e Superiore generali di ordini, congregazioni e istituti religiosi, che partecipano alle riunioni indette dalla Pontificia commissione per l'America Latina* 25th March 1960 («Acta Apostolicae Sedis» LII, 1960, pp. 344-349).

holders or the processes involved. Illich was fully aware that the conquest and colonisation of Latin America had cast long, persistent shadows on the path of its evangelisation; his keen observation of the continent's religious life from the Napoleonic period onwards, when each national state became independent and the Iberian monarchs' patronage of the Church vanished without being effectively replaced by the Vatican's (for this is exactly what was at stake at the time),[67] convinced him that throughout Latin American history, 'Faith had interpreted itself in a milieu that is incomparable to any other where it had to be lived.'[68] He feared that the new missionary activity could strengthen old imbalances, instead of adapting itself '*einem bestehenden Christentum, um danach dieses Christentum von innen heraus auch mit seiner Hilfe weiter zu entwickeln*.' ('to a pre-existing Christianity, which it would later develop from the inside thanks to its own contribution').[69]The task at hand was further complicated by the rapid social changes affecting those areas, also thanks to the *Alliance for Progress* itself: if the Church wanted to avoid relegating itself to the fringes of those unstoppable processes,[70] it necessarily had to partake in them, but in a way that would not

67 La Bella, 2006. La Bella, Gianni, (2006). 'Santa Sede e America Latina nell'attività del cardinale Casaroli.' In: Melloni Alberto, & Scatena, Silvia (eds.), *L'America Latina fra Pio XII e Paolo VI. Il Cardinale Casaroli e le politiche vaticane in una Chiesa che cambia.* Bologna: Il Mulino, pp. 181-183.

68 As stated in a letter to Father Fitzpatrick dating to April 1993. This intuition of his was to initiate the quest for documents which Valentina Borremans carried out over many years; these were later gathered together in the three series issued as *CIDOC Collection: The History of Religiosity in Latin America ca 1830-1970 on microfiche*, IDC, Zug 1985-1987.

69 *Principles for the Training of Missionaries (Summary)*; see Part VI.

70 'Wherever we look the choice is between economic development and death', Everett Reimer explained to the Superiors General of the religious orders who convened at CIF in Washington in January 1962, in reference to demographic growth (see *Education and Economic Development*, «Data for Decision in Latina America», May/June/July 1962, p. AB/3). See also the speech that Illich gave at that meeting, 'Education and Economic Development', in Part VI.

increase those people's alienation from their own traditions, and which would not deprive individuals of their dignity. Illich felt future missionaries should be prepared to tackle just this level of complexity, and to accommodate this spectrum of contrasting tendencies and needs; he also believed that the occasion required him to clearly outline, once again, the specific aspects and limitations of the seculars' apostolate on the one hand, and of the engagement of the consecrated on the other.[71] It was only after completing this series of writings, which was then discontinued rather abruptly around 1964, that he came to the realisation that medium-term intervention was in fact going to jeopardise the Holy See's *long-term programme*: instead of hastening the local Churches' attainment of self-sufficiency, it ran the risk of prolonging their dependence on foreign funds *sine die*, and of actually making it even worse. When he made his convictions public in 1967 they caused a major scandal; nonetheless, many authoritative ecclesiastical voices[72] and many of those who were active on the ground (who may have known Illich only by hearsay, or may even have actively opposed him) reached the same

71 See 'The Lay Missioner in Latin America'. In: *Perspectives. A Magazine Relating Religion to Our Times*, VII, 3, May-June 1962, pp. 81-83, and *Principles for the Training of Missionaries (Summary)*, op. cit., respectively. Both are available in Part VI.

72 Just to mention one episode among many possible ones, these were the conclusions reached by the 82 delegates from the US and Latin American congregations who convened in Mexico City in 1971, as summarised by Angelyn Dries: 'In the enthusiasm of the time, persons were chosen too hastily to serve in Latin America, without proper screening or adequate formation. Many religious were sent without a suitable understanding of the needs of the local Church. The consequence was that missionaries applied familiar strategies or improvised approaches to situations. Quantity rather than quality of personnel sometimes reinforced ecclesial structures which were not life-giving. The concentration of personnel and U.S. Church money in some locations made the local churches dependent and slowed the process of their "liberation". This centralization of North American missionaries created a ghetto mentality and fostered attitudes of superiority. The result was not enculturation into the area but the transplantation of American-style parish structural patterns'(see Dries, Angelyn, (1998). *The Missionary Movement in American Catholic History.* Maryknoll (NY): Orbis Book, p. 239).

conclusions on countless occasions in the following years. 'That sonovabitch Illich was right':[73] this remark could well be the most balanced summary of the debate on Illich's statements, and perhaps also of a whole missionary season of the US Church. It is indeed no coincidence that the indications and preoccupations which Illich voiced at the time have today been accepted, with no exception, as normative instructions within common missiological practice.[74]

It is remarkable that the only work which has seriously documented these years of the *Prophet of Cuernavaca*'s activity completely neglected to mention the historical context outlined above.[75] That is not the only gap in the literature available on the subject, however: there is no study, for instance, of Illich's far from short-lasting presence at the Second Vatican Council,[76] during the Second and Third Sessions of which

73 The whole episode has been retold in Costello (1979: 141-142). Although that volume is dotted with other accounts of a similar tone, it still cannot be accused of partiality.

74 Even Hartch (2015: 164-166) could not help noticing it, as he remarked on the essential convergence between Illich's evolution and what he deemed to be the "paradigmatic" experience of men such as Father Vincent Donovan and Father Leslie Newbegin. After all, Hartch's multi-faceted criticism of Illich can essentially be narrowed down to one point: namely, that he 'denied this same experience [which he had so adroitly understood] to many Americans' (p. 166). A significant renewal of interest in Illich's missiology in more recent times may be found in Samuel E. Ewell, III, (2019). *Faith Seeking Conviviality. Reflections on Ivan Illich, Christian Mission, and the Promise of Life Together*. Eugen (OR): Cascade Books.

75 Besides a copious amount of secondary literature, the above-mentioned volume by Todd Hartch relied on unpublished sources such as, among others, Father Fitzpatrick's papers at Fordham University, the Latin American Bureau's archive at the Catholic University of America, and Father Considine's diary held in Maryknoll. The above-mentioned contributions from Rosa Bruno-Jofré and Jon Igelmo Zaldívar availed themselves of CIDOC's archive at Colegio de México, while Silvia Scatena consulted Celam's archives (see Scatena, Silvia, (2006). 'Uomini e strumenti dell'aggiornamento latino-americano: il Celam di Manuel Larraín.' In: Melloni Alberto, & Scatena, Silvia (eds.), *L'America Latina fra Pio XII e Paolo VI. Il Cardinale Casaroli e le politiche vaticane in una Chiesa che cambia.* Bologna: Il Mulino, pp. 129-148. In the same collection see also Scatena's *In populo pauperum* (pp. 270-292). On the other hand, the existence of a personal archive belonging to Illich has never been reported.

76 This deficiency is however made up for by the "snapshots" of him included in the

this atypical monsignor acted as *peritus* for one of the four moderators of the assembly, the Belgian cardinal Léon-Joseph Suenens (it may indeed be asked whose good offices recommended him, since no previous contact between the two has ever been reported.[77] Perhaps it was those of Father François Houtard, an influential priest and a sociologist from Leuven who belonged to the same diocese of Malines-Brussels as Suenens, and who had also been one of CIF's first and closest collaborators. Or maybe through the intercession of Giuseppe Dossetti, a *peritus* for another moderator, Cardinal Lercaro, who had been a friend and an admirer of Illich's ever since the years of his Roman studies. Or yet still thanks to the influence of an old and prestigious acquaintance of Illich's, Giovanni Battista Montini, who had just been elected to the papacy). The Council's debate and the long elaboration of its documents, including the decree *Ad gentes* on the 'Church's missionary activity', must surely have set a term of compari-

diary which Angelina Alberigo wrote during the Second Vatican Council, a selection of which was included in the volume edited by Alberto Melloni, Marinella Perrone, and Serena Noceti (see Melloni, Alberto, (2012). *Vivere il Concilio. Il diario del Vaticano II di Angelina Alberigo.* In: Melloni, Alberto, & Perrone, Marinella, & Noceti, Serena (eds.), (2012). *Tantum aurora est: donne e Concilio Vaticano II.* Zürich – Berlin: LIT Verlag). The following is just a sample: 'These days we are following Father Ivan Illich with great interest. Of Slavic extraction, he has worked in New York with Puerto Ricans; he used to be the rector of the Catholic University [in Puerto Rico], but when he was asked to support the local Catholic party he refused, and was subsequently removed from that post. He is presently leading a secular organisation that effectively controls most of the funds sent by Europe's Catholics to their Latin American co-religionists. He is an avowed opponent of Samorè's, who would much prefer to end up setting up the usual Roman congregation for Latin America, but who has so far been strongly opposed by local bishops. Illich has come to Rome to organise the Latin American Episcopal Council's conference, to ensure that all future decisions will be taken by that institution. He is ready to purchase for his bishops all the technical support we can offer him, for his bishops, unlike the Italian ones, are aware of their ignorance. He is just as sharp as Pippo [Giuseppe Dossetti] is: he undeniably has less of a scientific background, but he also has more business sense, and fewer monastic inhibitions' (p. 122).

77 David Cayley (1992: 100) was once told by Illich that 'much earlier, Suenens had known me pretty well through a variety of circumstances'; unfortunately, no further details are known.

son for Illich's thought: the unprecedented formulation of a theological principle such as the one which dictated that 'the pilgrim Church is missionary by her very nature' cannot have failed to consolidate his reflections even before the decree's official promulgation at the end of 1965, since Illich, as an author, had focused right from the outset on the dual figures of the Church As a Nomad Tent and the Church As Leaven.

It may also be added that one of the members of the Second Vatican Council's commission involved in the development of that document was the Bishop of Orléans, Guy Riobé, the man who from its very inception was responsible for the *Union Sacerdotale Jesus Caritas* to which Illich was also affiliated:[78] it is indeed remarkable that the pre-eminence of Charles de Foucauld's teaching among the inspiring sources of Illich's missiological thought has so far not been acknowledged. From a biographical point of view, there was a network of personal relationships that indirectly linked Illich with this specific figure. The one he had with Maritain, for instance, or with René Voillaume, the founder of the Little Brothers of Jesus congregation who was demonstrably his guest in Puerto Rico as early as 1958 (even though he also spent long spells with Maritain in Rome in the same months as young Illich

78 In May 1969 the Bishop of Orléans wrote to Cardinal Šeper, the Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith: '*Je le connais depuis dix ans, à l'époque où j'étais responsable des Fraternités sacerdotales Charles de Foucauld dont il faisait partie*' ['I first met him ten years ago, when I was responsible for the Sacerdotal Fraternity of Charles de Foucauld of which he was a member']. This authoritative statement, reported by Jean-François Six (see Six, Jean-François, (1982). *Guy-Marie Riobé évêque et prophète*. Paris: Seuil, p. 281), demonstrates that Illich must have joined the *Union* in 1959, when he went to a retreat in Tamanrasset for five weeks, i.e. the exact period of time which the *Union* required all of its prospective new members to spend there; alternatively, he may have done so a year before, when, as he confirmed himself (see his *Commentary*, in McMahon, 1989: 155), he was visited by René Voillaume in Puerto Rico (indeed, it may be asked who acted as mediator between them on that occasion: was it still Maritain?). At any rate, Six's enjoyable book (which is highly recommended for the large number of unpublished documents it contains as regards the '*affaire* Illich', see pp. 268-288) provides documentary evidence on how Riobé and Illich 'met the first time in 1962 in Issy les Moulineaux, and immediately clicked together [...] Ivan Illich's influence on [Riobé] was soon to become of paramount importance' (*ibid.*, p. 271).

did), as well as with Brother Carlo Carretto, who became a very close friend of his during the five weeks he spent in Tamanrasset in the autumn 1959;[79] or with the Chilean bishop Manuel Larraín, who promoted the Spanish version of *Au coeur des masses* and wrote the foreword to it[80] (Illich informed Maritain, after his 1960 trip to Latin America, that 'Bishop Larraín came to pick me up at the Fraternity in Lima (built straight on the refuse heap of the city) and we drove together to Talca'),[81] and the one with Father Segundo Galilea, the coordinator of the *Union Sacerdotale*'s Latin American branch and a close collaborator of Cif. Even more important was the covert influence which Foucauld exerted through Godin and Daniel's book *France, pays de mission?* (1943), which subsequently inspired the *Mission de France* and its worker-priests.[82] All these elements were too important for a young European priest going through his training to allow himself to underestimate them, let alone ignore them. Indeed, they all contributed to express the traumatic perception of a world that had once been Christian, but which was now rapidly detaching itself from that faith. A world which had to be addressed once again by means of one's supportive presence and silent testimony, just as Foucauld had done: a "Life of Nazareth", as it were, in preparation for a subsequent explicit announcement. Much later, *i.e.* in 1975, that spirit was condensed in *Evangelii nuntiandi* in full awareness of the 'split between the Gospel and culture [as] the drama of our time',

79 Illich talked extensively about this episode in the *Foreword* he wrote for the English edition of Carretto's *Letters from the Desert* (1972, Maryknoll (NY): Orbis Book); see Part VI.

80 Voillaume, René, (1956). *En el corazón de las masas*. Madrid - Buenos Aires: Studium. The French first edition dated to three years before (see Voillaume, René, (1953). *Au coeur des masses*. Paris: Cerf).

81 Thus in the above-mentioned letter he sent to Maritain; the Fraternity he referred to was in all likelihood not the one in Lima, but actually the one in Santiago de Chile.

82 Bevans & Schroeder, 2004: 395-397.

thus leading to a text that emphasised the "primordial" nature of the 'wordless witness' aimed at evangelisation.[83]

At the end of the 1950s however, such an approach was clearly not the order of the day for Latin America; nonetheless, since Illich was developing his thought in a pluralised, secularised outpost, even at that early stage he drew no distinction between 'the Irishman among the Zulus [and] the bourgeois among the totally different culture of the French proletariat, or [between] the urban northerner in the rural South [and] the New York "boy" in a Puerto Rican neighborhood.'[84] All those people were in his view 'men who [had] left their own milieu to preach the Gospel in an area not their own from birth'; he therefore suggested they should adapt themselves to the permanent condition of the 'foreigner with us', to their destiny as *Ersatz*, and to being the temporary substitute for 'one whom the community he [was] building yearn[ed] to come from its own womb'[85] – in short, to an extreme form of self-sacrifice that could not possibly receive any form of human compensation. In this attitude one may easily perceive an echo of that 'substitute' spirituality which Foucauld elected to practice among the Tuareg people in the desert, with no intention of converting them or of establishing a Church there. One might even go as far as surmising a similar inclination to *badaliya*[86] behind the practice of 'apophasis' which Illich later claimed to have implemented in his life and in his "secular" preaching, and which some commentators have greatly emphasised. Of course, the risk is that of mistaking "apophasis"

83 Pope Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, Apostolic Exhortation, 8th December 1975, 20-21.

84 Thus in *Missionary Poverty* (1958); see Part III.

85 Thus in *Mission and Midwifery*. Part 2. Selection and Formation of the Missioner. See Part III below.

86 On this point see the work by Louis Massignon, one of De Foucauld's disciples, which has now been documented by Borrmans, Maurice, & Jacquin, Françoise (eds.), (2011). *Badaliya: au nom de l'autre* (1947-1962). Paris: Cerf).

for a form of reticence, or, worse still, for a kind of coded communication.[87] In the case in question, one should rather think of the type of silence that accompanies forsaking and sharing one's self,[88] akin to the one surrounding the 'freely-willed powerlessness, through which the world was saved.'[89] It is the silence of Eucharistic adoration: the form of life and devotion which Foucauld made his own, and the practice of worship that was favoured in Cuernavaca.

VII. The backdrop outlined above may provide a suitable reading of the exchange that took place between Illich and Larraín on their trip to Talca. Illich himself recounted it eight years later in the Jesuits' magazine, and recalled that on that occasion he had told his friend he was 'prepared if necessary to dedicate [his] efforts to stop the coming of missionaries to Latin America'; in that dialogue what really mattered was of course the interlocutor's reply.[90] On the other hand, the statement Illich gave Wayne Cowan in August 1969, according to which the creation of CIF had been prompted by the conviction that 'something had to be done under all circumstances to avoid this transfer of personnel' to Latin America,[91] had an altogether different context, one that obtained after the rift between Illich and the Catholic Church. The process of

87 As pointed out by David Cayley in his *Ivan Illich As an Esoteric Writer* (www.davidcayley.com/blog/category/Illich%2FEsoteric).

88 As Jim Morton perceptively understood in his *Introduction* to Illich's volume *The Church, Change and Development*; see Part III.

89 Thus in *The Eloquence of Silence*, op. cit. (Part I).

90 'They may be useless to us in Latin America, but they are the only North Americans whom we will have the opportunity to educate. We owe them that much.' *See Violence: A Mirror for Americans* in Part I.

91 See the interview which Illich gave to *Christianity and Crisis* in the summer of 1969, in the Appendix.
See the interview which Illich gave to Christianity and Crisis in the summer of 1969, in the Appendix.

self-understanding which Illich may have gone through in his stormy experience of the 1960s is not in question here; it is rather a matter of handling this and similar evidence with caution, as it could be so easily subjected to an anachronistic reading by both his apologists and his detractors. The point of the matter is that no *primary* source has so far emerged to support the notion that Illich had always planned, right from the beginning, an "anti-missionary project", or even a risky "*sabotage*" operation to the Church's detriment.[92] Proof against this interpretation is provided by his missiological writings discussed so far (which are admittedly little-known outside specialised circles), as well as by a series of factual circumstances which, at the risk of appearing somewhat pedantic, it is perhaps best to summarise here.

Firstly, the existence in Puerto Rico of an *'Institute of spiritual missionary formation for priests and sisters from the United States going to South America'* since the spring of 1960, as Illich reported to Maritain:[93] something which he, as a well-respected trainer of priests and members of the clergy destined to minister to immigrants, cannot possibly have initiated of his own volition and under his own responsibility, only to attract candidates that were then to be discouraged or redirected elsewhere. Secondly, the development, founding, and inauguration of CIF in Cuernavaca between the autumn of 1960 and the spring of 1961, which, though concomitant with PAVLA's first steps, preceded the formulation of the Vatican's *ten-year plan* in August 1961, and can in no way be in-

92 These were actually Hartch's accusations against Illich. Hartch's theories tended to push Illich's opposition to the 'missionary crusade' as far back in time as possible, thereby presenting him as inherently *the 'wrong man for the job'* of trainer right from the start (2015: 12-29), as a man harbouring a premeditated 'anti-missionary project' (2015: 74, and *passim*), and as a saboteur of his superiors' plans (2015: 163, 172). Those plans, conversely, were never discussed or questioned by Hartch, who on the basis of the principle of authority uncritically accepted them as correct and forward-looking by definition.

93 See the above-mentioned letter of 19th May 1960.

terpreted as opposition to the latter. Thirdly, the close working relationship which Illich immediately established with the Conference of the US Major Superiors. Their bulletin, *Data for Decision in Latin America*, was an information service aimed at bringing about an improved identification of Latin America's new religious houses and a more effective planning of the pastoral work to be carried out in them; Illich began to edit it at least from June 1961 onwards, namely two months before the watershed date of the Vatican intervention, and actually continued to do so for at least another whole year after it.

It is of course undeniable that Father Illich's "methods" and his psychagogy of estrangement were seen as unconventional, and at times even as disturbing; it is also true that once the features which had become part of his personal "myth" in the Archdiocese of New York were transferred to the whole of the North American Continent, they occasioned disquiet and perplexity. This notwithstanding, the training on offer in Cuernavaca was often seen as an essential experience, especially by the members of the religious orders.[94] In the spring of 1967 (*i.e*. right before the storm that wiped out his ecclesial activity as a whole, and which later turned him into a "writer of books" for good) Illich was still able to state to a prestigious publication in the field such as *Jesuit Mission* that 'in the last five years some 1,180 people have passed through the Center; all but 80 are now assigned to Latin America';[95] indeed,

94 In the neighbouring areas there was no dearth of missionary training facilities modelled on Cuernavaca, as was the case with Chicago's *Urban Training Center*; see the relevant information attached to Illich's short text *The Church, Change and Development* in Part III below.

95 See the interview 'The Meaning of Cuernavaca' in the Appendix, which Illich gave to *Jesuit Mission* in April 1967. The '1200 priests' who had passed through Cuernavaca were also mentioned, in a totally unrelated context, by Renato Poblete in the account he gave to Christian Smith in 1988 for his then forthcoming book (see, Smith, Christian (1991). *The Emergence of Liberation Theology. Radical Religion and Social Movement Theory*, Chicago – London: The University of Chicago, p. 119). Hartch, for his part,

one may wonder why history researchers have never verified those figures or honeycombed the relevant biographical data, before they acquiesced to a scripted version of the events that borders on low-quality fiction.[96] Indeed, there is in fact even evidence e *silentio* on this matter: the Roman "Inquisition", despite its gauche attempts to put Monsignor Illich on trial by widely dredging the murky waters of the basest denunciation, never even attempted to file the slightest accusation of "betrayal" or "sabotage" of the missionary activity against him.[97] It follows that one must yield before the evidence of the facts, and accept that Illich's project was for all intents and purposes a missionary one: it fed on theological thought and spiritual discipline, and was ready to ally itself, compete, and, if necessary, clash with those put forth by others. The fact that conflict ultimately prevailed is an outcome that should be unravelled patiently, rather than be treated as a postulate to be pushed back in time *ad libitum*. Sadly, no methodical study of the sources, and hence no reliable reconstruction, is yet available to fulfil such a task; one can therefore only rely on the texts Illich published himself, and on the scant information which may be gleaned from research carried out on collateral topics.

VIII. It has been suggested that what motivated the editorial changes made to the *CIF Reports* in April 1964, at the begin-

reported the figure for those who had been 'hosted' at CIF as '830 priests and 500 religious sisters' (2015: 74). It is rather evident that the figure given by Illich referred to the number of people effectively active on the field.

96 Ironically, Hartch wondered 'who knows what would have happened if the priests, sisters, and lay missioners discouraged by Illich had poured into Latin America? [...] It is not possible that some of them would have seen what Illich saw? [...] Imagine if there were a thousand more such people active in American life today' (2015: 166-167). Apart from the ironic similarity of the figures invoked by Hartch to the ones quoted by Illich, it is striking to note how arbitrary Hartch's method and criteria of judgement were.

97 See the note to the letter addressed *To the Prefect of the Holy Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Cardinal Franjo Šeper,* in Part VI.

ning of their third year of existence, was a shift in Illich's attitude towards the great missionary mobilisation.[98] The new editorial outlook of the *Reports* became more streamlined; they were issued at shorter intervals (*i.e.* every two weeks); their former caption '*Cultures, the Church and the Americas*' was dropped, and so was the rich metatextual apparatus through which their editors had, until then, developed an intense "educational" dialogue with their readership. Since that preparatory phase had ultimately been a form of communication between elites, it could at that point be seen as concluded; moreover, the activity of intercultural training for aspiring missionaries was by then well underway at the Centre, and the relevant progression of Illich's written musings on the missions was completed, or at any rate interrupted, by the end of the same year. At the same time, the development of a Documentation Centre within CIF (inspired by the similar one which Giuseppe Dossetti set up in Bologna)[99] with a sizeable library and other forms of research support, including the increasingly frequent opportunities for militant researchers to hold meetings and debates,[100] paved the way for a new dimension of scientific contact and exchange throughout Latin America. As a result of that, Cuernavaca soon became the intellectual conscience of an entire continent and a critical interface with the North, a role which it played for a short yet crucial period. All these developments pointed to a pondered reaction to other processes that were also underway in the dealings between the American Churches. The Vatican Council's long sessions in Rome favoured the contact and

98 This is the thesis advanced by Bruno-Jofré and Zaldívar in their essay (2016: 578 ff).

99 On this point, see Paolo Prodi (Prodi, Paolo, (2016). 'Cuernavaca 1966.' In: Prodi, Paolo, *Giuseppe Dossetti e le officine bolognesi*. Bologna: Il Mulino, pp. 205-218). The volume also contains the letter which Illich wrote on 23rd June 1969 to summarise (and give a new boost to) the two Centres' joint history (see pp. 264-267).

100 See the *Notes on CIF* in Part VI.

exchange between bishops from the two hemispheres; at the beginning of 1964 Chicago hosted the first annual meeting of the Catholic Inter-American Cooperation Program (CICOP), LAB's *radical* arm led by Father Louis Colonnese (a former collaborator of CIF), which brought the leaders of the Latin American clergy together with their US counterparts in the presence of a large public made up of insiders, activists, and observers.[101] Such gatherings aroused Illich's distrust and annoyed him, and indeed he would later criticise them, going even so far as resorting to provocation in order to do so: their underlying approach, no matter how well-meaning, or perhaps just because it was so, was in his eyes hopelessly hampered by a "US-centric" perspective, and he was also alert to the exceptional stress they brought to bear on the LAB's financial resources on which CIF itself drew. Illich had a different attitude to the spirit of the Second Vatican Council, and in April 1964 he decided to convene a number of Latin American theologians at Cenfi in Petropolis (CIF's equivalent in a Portuguese-speaking environment) in order to lay the foundations of an approach meant to be firmly rooted in the Continent's history and tradition: that meeting is now regarded as the origin of what would later come to be known as 'the theology of liberation'.[102] It involved a complete overhaul of perspectives, a shift in *focus* that actually marginalised the missionary mobilisation, rather than attempting to redirect it or to oppose it head-on. Unfortunately, the material which the new *CIF Reports* spread along a South-North axis offers no great contribution to the discovery of more precise information on these new ferments and does not even settle the question of whether the impression of a new polemic stance towards the US Church on Illich's part may be justified.

101 Costello (1979: 111-121) reported extensively on these events.

102 See Smith, 1991: 120; and Scatena, 2006: 58-61.

It is therefore best to confine oneself to the proven fact that the hostilities against PAVLA, one of the organisations of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops' Latin America Bureau were initiated only in April 1965, when Illich addressed a letter to its director, Father Raymond Kevane. In truth, PAVLA had always been the weak link in the "crusade" and was a frequent source of embarrassment for LAB, which would eventually decree its untimely termination; moreover, Illich's letter was not a public document (it would only be printed in 1970), and its overall tone and content were equally prudent. It reasserted well-established principles, such as for instance the urgency of supporting the local Churches' endeavours to reach their self-sufficiency, or the need to base the lay apostolate on specific secular competences, given that the stated ultimate goal was to imbue the secular environments surrounding them with a Christian spirit. It stressed the need for the duration of missionary activities not to be too short and confirmed that CIF's doors were in any case wide open to PAVLA candidates.[103] The episode was essentially a minor one, but the sender's frankness in pointing out the disagreements on the table and in depicting the years to come in harsh, almost "apocalyptic" terms betrayed the unusual pressure which his surrounding circumstances exerted on him. It could be posited, for instance, that Illich's early (and polemic) abandonment of the Vatican Council at the end of the Third Session the previous autumn may have been suggested by his feeling that the Church was in no way ready to adopt radical measures, even without taking into consideration the issue of nuclear armament,[104] and that it was consequently necessary to fight against that constraint by taking a courageous, and even provocative, stance. It could also be added that only a month before penning the letter to

103 See *Dear Father Kevane* in Part III.

104 See Cayley, 1992: 100-101.

Father Kevane he lost his mother Ellen Rose, who may have taken away with her some of his lingering qualms about starting a controversy within the Church. An equally relevant factor, nonetheless, could also have been the historical context of the time, which was rapidly moving away from President Kennedy's New Frontier.[105] February 1965 witnessed the beginning of the escalation of the US military presence in Vietnam, and in April of the same year the first contingent of US Marines landed in Da-Nang, thus starting what was going to be the worst reputational crisis, both internally and abroad, for the 'Leader of the Free World'. On 28th April, the day after Illich sent his letter, US troops landed in the Dominican Republic to prevent the *Partido Revolucionario* from regaining power, and on 2nd May the related 'Johnson Doctrine' was publicly enunciated as the US's unilateral "right" to intervene militarily in areas considered to be of immediate strategic interest to them (a doctrine which authoritative members of the Latin American clergy would later deem '*antichristiana y antihumana*').[106] A military coup had taken place in Brazil the previous year (on that occasion Illich had to intercede to save his friends Paulo Freire and Francisco Julião from prison) as it had in Bolivia, and in 1965 Father Camílo Torres, one of CIF's collaborators, joined the ranks of the armed opposition to the regime installed by the *Frente Nacional* in Colombia. More could of course be added here: the *Alliance for Progress* was a political and symbolic fiasco even before it became an economic one, while in many Latin American societies, structural contradictions were worsening and political enmities were becoming radicalised. The 'theory of interdependency' (*i.e.* the notion according to which the conditions of devel-

105 On the changes affecting the political and ecclesiastical climate in the mid-1960s, see Smith, 1991: 89-121, and Scatena, 2006: 68-77.

106 As stated by the Domenican priest Alberto de Ezcurdia, professor at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (CIDOC *Informa* II, 20, 15th October 1965).

opment and underdevelopment in the two hemispheres were systemically interlinked, and one hemisphere could therefore not be expected to sort the other one out) was becoming increasingly popular among men of culture, and even within the Church itself; criticism of the US-inspired power system and development model was also making headway.[107] It goes without saying that all these elements thoroughly affected missionaries, first and foremost in their relationship with the land of their birth and their personal set of inner beliefs and prospects: these aspects were expressly mentioned by Illich in the speeches he gave at the time, which bore witness to the severity and harshness of the "identity crisis" in question.[108] The issue went beyond the individual difficulties of those who kept flocking to Cuernavaca in their droves, however. It was the missionary endeavour as a whole that the world's changing context was beginning to question: the imperialistic slant taken on by the economic and military relationship between *cultures and the Americas* openly reproduced the old colonial imbalances, and actively prevented the adoption of a different approach. 'In 1965-66 you had to be an intelligent person to understand this', Illich remarked a few years later; 'by 1969 I don't think that there are many intelligent missioners who believe that as missioners they have any business there.'[109] Within those few years, missions had to face the deepest crisis ever recorded in the Church's history.

At the same time, the internal dynamics of the Catholic world were also becoming increasingly complicated. The end of the Second Vatican Council in 1965 led to a period of enthusiasm and uncertainty, in which the presence of contrasting forces hinted at the possibility of greater tensions and

107 Scatena, 2006: 92-96.

108 See for instance the interview 'The Meaning of Cuernavaca' in the Appendix.

109 As stated in the interview he gave to *Christianity & Crisis*; see the Appendix.

rifts in the future. Already on the eve of the Council's conclusion Illich warned US Catholics that the 'improvement' efforts promoted by the Council were going to be swept away by the very spirit of 'renewal' instilled by the Council itself.[110] Of course, he could not foresee what shape this renewal would take, and actually thought it was best to leave that aspect to the Holy Spirit's care; he had no hesitation, however, in condemning the delays with which the US Churches had acted, both in terms of structures (*e.g.* the territorial parishes) and activities (such as sending staff to the Latin American missions). His interpretation of the clues concerning the Church's future shape was undoubtedly informed by the pastoral experimentations undertaken in Latin America: Cuernavaca, still an obvious point of reference, and especially the institute run by Father Segundo Galilea and his team of travelling clergy trainers, which was in fact less of an institute and more of a 'movement at the service of vernacular pastoral program in a poor and prophetic Church at the service of mankind'.[111] The emergence of a theological approach tailored on the Latin America context has already been mentioned; it should be added here, however, that after its swift elaboration in the conferences held in Bogota, La Havana, and Cuernavaca in the summer of 1965, it soon developed in unforeseen directions which at times perplexed Illich himself.[112] Caught be-

110 Smith, Lane, 'U.S. Church Is Backward, Priest From Mexico Hints', *The Seattle Times*, 20th November, 1965. Considering the period in question (the early 1960s), this article stands out as a rare account of Illich's involvement in a public event (the reporter still saw him as a mere 'priest from Mexico', even though he was already 'regarded as controversial') which saw the presence of a Catholic audience mainly drawn from Seattle University, at the time run by the Jesuits. It is furthermore remarkable that Illich should present as early as 1965 his proposal for the abolition of the professional clergy, whom he deemed to be just as obsolete as the "geographical parish".

111 *Latin America Pastoral Institute in operation*, dated 'Cuernavaca, 1st November 1965'; issued in *Cif Reports* IV, 20 (1st November 1965), and later also in *Cidoc Cuaderno* 39, 1970, p. 11/15.

112 Illich provided hints in this sense in his commentary on Bob Fox, with a likely reference to the meeting that took place in Cuernavaca in July 1965 (see McMahon, 1989: 159).

tween these contrasting tensions, CELAM (the coordinating Council of the Latin American bishops) prepared for its second conference to be held in Medellín in 1968 by adopting a Vatican II-inspired policy that was courageous yet prudent, since they could obviously not afford to opt for the *renewal*'s most daring alternatives. Not only did they worry about the activities of Father Galilea's Ispla, which would later be first marginalised and then normalised, but they were also concerned about the trip which Illich had taken to Colombia in quest of documents on Father Camílo Torres, who had been killed in combat in February 1966; that visit greatly alarmed President Larraín, and led him to demand that CIF should enforce stricter adherence to the Church's discipline, or else ensure a clearer allocation of responsibilities.[113]

Faced by that alternative and spurred by the sudden need to vacate the Centre's original premises, in April 1966 Illich chose the second option and decided to concentrate on the *Centro intercultural de documentación* (CIDOC), which became the distinguishing trademark of all the activities subsequently carried out by him and his main collaborators. The renovated institute's secular nature and its new work programme ('the documentation and the analysis of the ideologies' influence on social change in Latin America', as *directora* Valentina Borremans explained to CELAM's inspectors in 1967) indicated that CIF's legacy had been inherited and then marginalised, thereby allowing it to fade in importance; indeed, both the institute and its programme became associated with a kind of community life that was no longer tied to a pre-established institutional framework or built around daily liturgy, but was rather brought into being and fed by the mere intensity of personal participation, shared commitment,

113 See Scatena, 2006: 270-274, and 111-113.

mutual openness, and hospitality.[114] While trying to protect Mendez Arceo's diocese from any potential consequence, this *ekklesía* based on sheer friendship now enjoyed a freedom of analysis, judgement and action that was no longer subjected to external constraints; it could therefore radicalise its views on Latin America's actors and processes, such as the US's growing interferences, the Catholic forces' ideological and political collocation, and the hierarchies' attitude. In August 1966, shortly after Larraín's sudden death, Illich wrote to Pope Paul VI to ask for a private audience in order to 'portare la Sua attenzione su certi aspetti dell'invio di ecclesiastici all'America Latina […] i quali facilmente Le devono sfuggire' ('…bring to Your attention some of the aspects involved in sending the clergy to Latin America […] which may have easily escaped You').[115] He placed his plea under the patronage of Father René Voillaume and Bishop Hélder Câmara; shortly afterwards he also asked them to support with the Pope, Erich Fromm's proposal to hold a world conference in Rome under the Pope's aegis, to counter the threat of extinction which the ongoing technical and military escalation posed for humanity. In the autumn of 1966, after both attempts had failed, Illich must have felt that he was left with no choice other than appealing directly to God's people in the US, to let them at last

114 Illich explicitly mentioned this in the above-mentioned interview which he gave to the *Jesuit Mission* (see the Appendix). One may also be referred to the account provided by Paolo Prodi (2016: 211-212): 'It really was a beautiful mass, on account of both the natural simplicity of the ceremony (a wicker basket for the holy hosts, a table, etc.), and the high degree of religious participation…I was thus able to observe a dimension which had escaped me in the past days. And it had escaped me exactly because here they try to be as little institutionalised as possible. I believe Father Ivan felt ready to celebrate mass only at 5, after we had been conversing for half an hour, and one could tell he almost had a physical urge to do so. I do not think this system could have much scope for application in daily life, but it certainly opens up new possibilities for freedom and humanity to which our mentality makes us altogether blind. Above all, it was a deeply religious experience, one that I found unsettling inasmuch as it left me thoroughly shaken.'

115 See Ocampo Villaseñor, T., (1969). 'Mexico: "Entredicho" del Vaticano a Cidoc, 1966-1969. Documentos y reacciones de prensa.' *Cidoc Dossier* 37, p. 4/28.

become fully aware of the actual ecclesiastical and political importance of his missionary efforts. The text he prepared to this end was however rejected by the *National Catholic Reporter* for its exceedingly argumentative nature, and was published in the Jesuits' weekly magazine only at the beginning of 1967; it went off like a bomb right half-way through the fourth CICOP meeting in Boston. That was exactly the sort of effect its author had hoped for: there was now nothing left to do but fight that good battle to the very end.

IX. If one re-examines the best-known and most explicit texts of the 1967 campaign, it is not hard to come across some of the permanent features of Illich's thought and action that began to emerge after the above-mentioned turning point at the end of the 1950s. *The Seamy Side of Charity* reminded everybody of the patent fact that 'men and money sent with missionary motivation carry a foreign Christian image, a foreign pastoral approach, and a foreign political message':[116] this was of course the exact opposite of a correct missionary attitude, and by extension of healthy ecclesial dynamism and of a vital interaction between cultures. On the strength of 'the most radically traditional theology', *The Vanishing Clergyman* did altogether away with the originally postulated need of 'men and money' and prefigured the abolition of that professional clergy, the defining institution of the second Christian millennium, the one at the core of both the 'Tridentine paradigm' and of canon law.[117] As for the missions' ultimate goal, *The Powerless Church* questioned the very purpose of 'men and money', and suggested that the Church's historical task had very little to do with the exercise of any kind of power, be it the management of social services, the conditioning of politi-

116 *The Seamy Side of Charity*; see Part I.

117 *The Vanishing Clergyman*, *ibidem*.

cal choices, or the moral direction of humanity's *progressio*.[118]

A careful reading of these texts also reveals the presence of a range of historical and theological motives that pushed their way through them, forces which only the 1960s could have evoked and brought to maturity. Unequivocal proof in this sense is supplied by the conference on religious experience which Illich gave in Mexico City in the autumn of 1966, that is, immediately before the appearance of the texts under examination.[119] It provides a clear record of Illich's transition through something not too dissimilar to a Weber-Barth constellation: on the one hand "the world's disenchantment" (*i.e.* the elimination of any supranatural element from a world now fully given to rationality), and on the other the reassignment of transcendental elements to a domain of pure transcendency (that is *wholly Other*, as is common knowledge). This means that if these "astral" influences were to be updated by skipping one generation, one would come across Alfred Schütz's sociological research on non-rational action driven by the "dictates" of common sense, and Dietrich Bonhöffer's prophesy of a non-religious interpretation of the Bible's tenets that could at last suit mankind's coming of age; if a further generation were to be skipped, thus reaching Illich's own ('the seventh after Bacon's'),[120] one would come across Illich's peers and fellow countrymen Thomas Luckmann and Peter Berger, the sociologists of religion, or Bishop John Robinson and Reverend Harvey Cox, the theologians of "secularisation". In short, it may be claimed that that theological line, with a clear imprint from the Reformation, encouraged Illich to establish an opposition between *fides* and *religio*, or, to express it more adroitly, to re-read in contrastive terms a distinction with

118 *A Church Without Power*, *ibidem*.

119 See *Aesthetic and Religious Experience* in Part IV.

120 *Ibid*.

which he had already become acquainted by other means; the sociologists, conversely, inspired him to conceive *religio* as a "social construct", namely something that was at once the shared anthropological feature and the sacred canopy of the institutionalisation process that is intrinsically associated with every form of human socialisation.[121]

One of Illich's distinguishing traits was his "dialectical" use of these two interpretative keyboards. He turned the danger of "reification", which constantly lurked behind the objectifying processes that bring about 'the social construction of reality', into a springboard for an all-encompassing criticism of the ideologies, idolatries, delusions and sublimations that were at work in the contemporary world, regardless of whether they were Christian, pseudo-Christian, or anti-Christian. By subsuming all of them under the 'mythology' category, he endeavoured to separate them from a 'mystical' dimension that was completely unrelated to them: a mysticism which in its turn impelled mankind to take a disenchanted look at themselves, to become more consciously and intensely realistic, and to 'personalise' their actions and relationships more thoroughly. It is not hard to recognise in this dialectic approach the same scientific-existential slant that was at the core of CIDOC's community experience; perhaps Cuernavaca's powers of inspiration were not just confined to Rancho Tetela, after all. Illich may have also owed a dialogical debt to Erich Fromm's most recent discussion of the 'X-experience', as well as to the 'non-theistic mysticism' that guided his re-reading of the biblical and rabbinical traditions;[122] Fromm's work

121 See Berger, Peter L., & Luckmann, Thomas. (1966). *The Social Construction of Reality. A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*. Garden City (NY): Doubleday.

122 See Fromm, Eric, (1966). *You Shall Be as Gods. A Radical Interpretation of the Old Testament and its Tradition*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston. It is important to bear in mind who the instigators and the prospective audience of this conference were, since there were many "humanist" psychiatrists from the Mexican Psychoanalytic Association founded by Fromm among them.

may have also acted as his introduction to Freud's "Enlightenment" and other "teachers of suspicion", albeit in the opposite direction. Illich's friendship and exchanges with Fromm still await a thorough, source-based scholarly study;[123] regardless of how one may judge them, however, what needs to be stressed here is that, contrary to Fromm's position, and similarly to the Kerygmatic theology of the mid-20th century, the mystical dimension to which Illich referred was unquestionably to be identified with the core of the New Testament's message, namely the proclamation of the kingdom. This point is of vital importance, and will have to be examined more closely at a later stage. For the time being it suffices to say that the scenario conjured up by the texts examined in the present analysis clearly shows that Illich's action was first and foremost aimed at raising the Catholic public's awareness, in a quasi-therapeutic fashion, of the interests and power relations which propaganda regularly kept hidden from view, and which the passiveness typical of seculars kept in a condition of ecclesiastical "minority" also contributed to suppress from the collective consciousness. Secondly, it demonstrates that Illich endeavoured to promote a radical "demythologisation" (and deinstitutionalisation) of the Church's own ranks by

123 A special emphasis on the role played by Fromm in the evolution of Illich's thought throughout the 1960s may be found in the works by Bruno-Jofré and Zaldívar; this is especially true of the already-mentioned *Monsignor Ivan Illich's Critique of the Institutional Church, 1960-1966* (see pp. 575-576 and 580-581), which nonetheless tended to treat Fromm's influence as a given, rather than as an aspect in need of further investigation. However, the authors did not take into consideration a text such as *Missionary Poverty*, which was published in 1958 (in Europe it was issued under the title *A Psychological Study*) and unquestionably preceded Illich's 1961 meeting with Fromm: it displayed a profound knowledge of psychology, and even the use of rather specialised Freudian vocabulary, which Illich must have acquired in his capacity as spiritual director of aspiring missionaries. The authors also overestimated Illich's closeness to Abbot Grégoire Lemercier, who introduced psychoanalysis to the Benedictine monastery of *Santa María de la Resurrección* located near Cuernavaca: while it is true that journalists associated the two men in the (rather infelicitous) sobriquet 'the two volcanoes of Cuernavaca', and that Bishop Méndez Arceo always showed benevolence towards both of them, there is no record of any significant interaction between them.

questioning the fundamental distinction between the clergy and the laity at its core. Finally, it proves that he demanded the acknowledgement of the role which "secular religions" and their relevant structures were playing in the modern process of 'the social construction of reality'; he consequently advocated the Church's necessary withdrawal from all civic and political strife, not only to safeguard the "mystery of the unity" of its faithful, but also to help it become the guardian of a far more sensitive and decisive aspect of those same processes, *i.e.* their *meaning*. The definition which Illich gave of that task summarised in his eyes the experience of the kingdom: he cast it as a 'Christian celebration of change'.

The use of 'kingdom', 'celebration', 'of change', marked a turning point in the terminology employed by this priest who was now forty years of age. Of course, when one considers his writings on the Church and the missions, it is immediately apparent that the dialectical approach mentioned above was firmly rooted in his intellectual and spiritual personality. The need to wear interpretative bifocals becomes particularly pressing when faced with a man and a writer who, while addressing *Integrity*'s secular readership on the subjects of parishes and migrants, explained the biblical meaning of consecrated virginity, and recommended the reading of a synthesis of Carmelite mysticism as a guiding model; a man who, while introducing himself to the teaching staff of the Catholic University in Ponce as the new deputy rector, chose to speak of the eschatological 'last four things', and explained the primacy of silence to aspiring missionaries busy acquiring the language spoken in their prospective mission. The fact that in 1967, 'at the time of the March on the Pentagon', such a man should issue *A Call to Celebration* is only partially surprising; what was really unprecedented was the sudden combination of an active dimension with a contemplative one, which the public and the "political" nature of that remarkable 'mani-

festo' clearly highlighted. This innovation was obviously allowed and supported by exceptional circumstances, including a whole generation which in that social climate endeavoured to cultivate what Walter Benjamin had once termed the 'weak Messianic power' accorded to each generation.[124] On the other hand, it is also true that Illich's *A Call for Celebration* began to circulate in an anonymous, informal shape two years before its publication; it was addressed to individuals rather than masses, and displayed a language that was much more suggestive than cogitative or inflammatory; the choice of this specific communicative approach testifies to the unique nature of his initiative. Illich subsequently included that text at the beginning of his first book, and elected to incorporate a reference to it also in the latter's title; those choices would therefore seem to indicate that *A Call for Celebration* constituted a privileged access to the hidden core of his now mature thought, an encouragement to his readership, as it were, to venture in the same direction.[125]

X. It is impossible to establish whether young Illich was *au fait* with the debate on the theology of history that pervaded the Catholic world – and France in particular – in the wake of the Second World War, even though it may easily be assumed that he was. What can be said with any certainty is that said debate, which would go down in history as the clash between "Incarnationists" and "Eschatologists", was summarised by Murray in an essay with which Illich was very familiar: in-

124 The predictions to be found in *A Call for Celebration* concerned mainly the various strands of the youth culture of the time, starting with the *Port Huron Statement* (see the relevant documentation in Bloom, Alexander, & Breines, Wini, (2003). *"Takin' it to the Streets". A Sixties Reader*. Oxford - New York: Oxford University Press). A more in-depth discussion on the relevant historical context may be found in the *Editorial Note* to *A Call for Celebration* in Part I. The quotation by Walter Benjamin may be found in the second of his renowned *Theses on the Concept of History*.

125 See Part I.

deed, he considered it so important that he attempted to have it translated and circulated in Italy as early as 1954.[126] It essentially posited the issue of the relationship between *res sacra* and *res humana*, between historical (and of course technical, economic, and political) progress and the kingdom of God. In other words, after having taken their infinite qualitative difference as a given, it asked if history could pave the way for the kingdom, or at least prefigure it, or whether the latter was simply meant to be the former's *krisis*, nemesis, and downfall. The humanism which Illich professed and shared with Maritain, Murray, and later Fromm – not to mention the emphasis he placed on the subject of Incarnation at a later stage – would seemingly suggest that he should be included among the supporters of the first school of thought; even a remotely attentive reader of Illich knows, however, that such a solution is far from being satisfactory. It is eminently possible that in the present case, the terms of the dispute and the religious culture which originated them may in fact exceed their usefulness as premise, and ultimately become misleading.

Luckily, the text in which Illich directly tackled the relationship between time and eternity, and between this world and the next, has survived. It is the same text drawn up in two versions for two separate kinds of audience (a *meditatio* for devout lay people, and an academic *lectio*): both of them

126 It was J.C. Murray S.J.'s *Christian Humanism in America* (see Social Order III, 1953, pp. 233-244), which was later re-edited and published as 'Is it Basket Weaving?' (in: Murray, J. C. S.J., (1960). *We hold these truths*. New York: Sheed and Ward, pp. 175-191). In June 1954 Illich was granted permission by both Murray and the text's translator (the Jesuit Father Giorgio Flick from Bologna, an old acquaintance of Illich's) to circulate the essay 'among a group of friends belonging to the Graduates' Movement of Italy's Catholic Action' (it was probably the group run by Domenico Farias and Maria Mariotti in Reggio Calabria; indeed, at the time in question Farias was staying at the Documentation Centre which Giuseppe Dossetti had recently set up in Bologna). No further details are known as to the initiative's outcome, but it seems quite likely that the veto which the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (then directed by Cardinal Ottaviani) passed on Murray in 1954 may have put a stop to it. On the related debate, see Besret (Besret, Bernard, (1964). *Incarnation ou Eschatologie? Contribution à l'histoire du vocabulaire religieux contemporain, 1935-1955*. Paris: Cerf).

were self-inspired, non-*ad hoc* pieces, and both were conceived when Illich was thirty and about to transition from a pseudonym-based anonymity to a full claim of ownership of his writings. All these elements concur to suggest that their theme was somehow one of the central pillars of his thought: death, or rather the moment of death, or, to be even more precise, the very *act* of dying (the intransitivity of dying, as something that does not allow for a passive conjugation, was a subject with which Illich dealt repeatedly over the decades; it can thus be seen as the longest-lasting motif in his reflection, and in a way even as the foundation of his Christian existentialism). He described it as 'that one human act which begins in time and ends with eternity and yet belongs to neither, in which life in its fullness comes to a man all at once and what was a process becomes a state'. It was the one act that summed up a whole life's countless others in a single 'yes' or 'no' to reality, that is to say, ultimately to oneself, to one's ontological limitations, and to one's indignity in the face of God; that act became consequently fixed for eternity in that very 'yes' or 'no' (indeed, it was in that perspective that Illich re-elaborated the traditional doctrine on the eschatological 'last four things'). On this threshold between two dimensions, right in 'the timeless point at which the decision is made', mankind reached their full, free maturity as human beings, but also suffered the ultimate loss of their own selves, and the abandonment 'into the unfamiliar nakedness of eternity'. Since 'in its existential reality […] every act of man is a preview of death', however, it could be surmised that every *hic et nunc* experienced with equal intensity would equally present itself at the end of time as a definitive assent to the reality of things, to the human condition, and to the self caught in that very *hic et nunc*; as such, it would constitute the final waiver of all further projections of life, as well as of any desire to control the future and

own the material world.[127] Under all circumstances, human actions could become a rehearsal and a training exercise for the kind of anticipated death which Illich, as a young man, identified with the attainment of the poverty of spirit that was so dear to his teacher and mentor Auer.[128]

In those texts, Illich portrayed praying as the action that, more than any other, could prepare an individual for death, understood as human life's ultimate and supreme action. A life of prayer, *i.e.* a consecrated life, was in fact a condition which Illich defined in *The Vanishing Clergyman* as the choice 'to live *now* the absolute poverty every Christian

127 The excerpts quoted above are from *Rehearsal for Death and The End of Human Life* (see Part V and VI respectively). Illich's thought was of course developed within a wide philosophical and theological framework, which ranged from Heidegger and Bultmann's emphasis on the theme of existential decision, to Guardini and von Balthasar's notion of an involvement of the whole of man's historical existence in the last things. The only explicit contemporary reference to be found in Illich's text, nonetheless, is in fact to Palémon Glorieux, a medievalist from the *Institut catholique* in Lille who was extremely sensitive to Father Chénu and Saulchoir's Thomist *ressourcement*, as well as to the teachings of Abbé Godin, to the experiences made by the *Mission de France*, and to the spirituality displayed by *Jeunesse Ouvrière* and its founder Cardijn. The theme of an individual's *activity* at the time of death, on which Glorieux placed special emphasis, was later expanded by Ladislaus Boros (*Mysterium mortis*, 1964) and Karl Rahner (*Zur Theologie des Todes*, 1958); both authors were quoted by Illich on this same subject in his *Medical Nemesis* (1976). For a general overview of the matter, see Colzani (Colzani, Gianni. (2003). *Escatologia e teologia della storia.* In: Canobbio, Giacomo, & Coda, Piero (eds.). *La teologia del XX secolo. Un bilancio.* Vol. II. Prospettive sistematiche. Roma: Città nuova, pp. 483-560).

128 This theme has enjoyed a rich tradition within Christianity, and it is consequently not possible to determine which of its many strands may have influenced Illich's spirituality as a (possibly extremely) young man. It may nonetheless be useful to compare his position with the contemporary one held by Giuseppe Dossetti, which ran as follows: 'It is intrinsic to the Spirit [...] to progressively replace the created personality with the uncreated one that is necessary for the wedding: *i.e.* the person of the Word. / Henceforth, therefore, *I shall* increasingly *have to live to die* (in order to be reborn for the eternal wedding); that is to say, to allow for the most extended and fruitful chance to love charitably, namely giving glory to eternity, in order to support the preparations which the Spirit is making within me to lead me to the *act par excellence*, the act of my death' (Dossetti, Giuseppe. (2010). 'Esercizi della Trinità e della morte, 20 ottobre 1953.' In: Dossetti, Giuseppe, *La coscienza del fine. Appunti spirituali 1939-1955.* Milano: ed. Paoline, p. 202).

hopes to experience at the hour of death';[129] a similar choice of words may be encountered, for comparison purposes, in the grammar of the missionary *silence* that Illich preached around 1960. It seems possible to venture that in the years between 1966 and 1968 the word which he adopted to define the experience of finding oneself at the *end* of time and *beyond* it was rather *celebration*. That choice was undoubtedly dictated by commitments that had become very different from a priest or a spiritual director's usual ones, as well as by the unique community experience provided by CIDOC; nevertheless, it could perhaps also owe something to the inspiration provided by an extraordinary interlocutor such as Father Robert Fox. The most conspicuous instance of its use was indeed in the text of *A Call for Celebration*, which he developed with Father Fox himself in 1967. What catches the eye in that text, even after a superficial perusal, is that it pitched 'celebration' directly against 'planning': it evoked the future in the present and dismissed all kinds of "social engineering", it liquidated the tyranny of usefulness and productivity while extolling human perfection in poetry and in playing, and it retained historical time to introduce in it the image of fulfilment. After all, Illich explicitly mentioned this "messianic" quality of the celebratory act also in other texts, such as for instance *How Will We Pass on Christianity?*, the essay that concludes the present collection. Dating to the late 1971, it stated that 'the density of the Incarnation, the only time the Lord is present to us is at the present moment which we celebrate together'; it followed that 'to live as a Christian means to live in the spirit of *Maran atha* – the Lord is coming at this moment. It means to live and to enjoy living at the edge of time, at the end moment of

129 In *The Vanishing Clergyman* (see Part I) this expression specifically referred to the vow of chastity; elsewhere, such as for instance in *How Will We Pass on Christianity?* (see Part V), a similar consideration was made in connection with the vow of poverty. As regards what follows below, see the above-mentioned *The Eloquence of Silence* in Part I.

time.'[130] Living as a Christian entailed living in a state of *celebration*: every contingency had to be accepted for what it was, had to be elevated to the status of *ultimate* contingency, and had to be consigned to a different dimension in which concepts such as before and after, 'already' and 'not yet', ceased to be mutually exclusive. It was through such a process that temporality itself became sublimated and suspended, and came to lean directly towards its opposite. 'Just as the Messiah is always at the door, the kingdom is ever "already" present: in this moment, at death, at parousia', as was taught by the 1966 conference. The important term that needs to be highlighted in that triad is the middle one, the one that structures the series itself, and leads back to the starting point.

Indeed, the kingdom 'lies under the sign of the cross', and 'between its arrival and its fulfilment there is the cross': it was only by means of that *intermediary* that the two opposite poles could meet. The 'celebration' was always the celebration of the Lord's death: it was its memory ('[the] memory of a last meal, the sort they give a condemned prisoner before execution'), its acceptance ('[the] painful submission to the Will of God, demanded by man's sin which mankind's original sin demands'), and the partaking in it ('the gift of His own [life] that Jesus, the Christ, makes to the believer').[131] Only by passing through that narrow door, together with Christ through nothingness, could the human condition be glorified, and could the *hic et nunc* stretch into timelessness. If a background to such a concept, or rather to such an experience of 'celebration', were to be provided, insofar as it is possible to understand it, one ought to invoke the precedent of the Liturgical Movement, which Illich must undoubtedly have come

130 See Part V.

131 The relevant passages were developed within a 15-year timespan, between *The End of Human Life* (1956, see Part IV), *Aesthetic and Religious Experience* (1966, *ibid.*) and *How Will We Pass on Christianity?* (1971, see Part V).

across in the years of his adolescence in Vienna. Particularly relevant to this context was its belief in the paramount role which worship played in the establishment of the Church, as well as in the real presence of an actual redeeming event within worship itself. The significant influence which a personality such as Romano Guardini may have exerted on Illich as he grew from an adolescent into a young man, for which there is indirect evidence, should also be added here. It may be surmised that the dramatic description of the Lord's story in Guardini's major work, which Illich demonstrably admired,[132] deeply affected Illich's understanding of faith. 'To be a Christian means to participate in the life of Christ', Guardini wrote in developing what is in all likelihood his most original spiritual intuition; as mentioned above, Illich for his part wrote that 'Faith [is] the acceptance of a gift of His own experience of living (*vivencia*) that Jesus, the Christ, makes to the believer. Faith is not the acceptance of a doctrine; it is the commitment to searching, with dedication and risk, the personal, intimate identification with the intimacy of another person. Rabbi Yeshua ben Josef, as the object of this faith, is my brother and friend Jesus, the Lord, the Son of God.' An extreme consequence of this, according to Guardini, was that 'the movement towards the evil nothingness stemming from sin must be brought to completion. One way or another we must brush the depths of annihilation Christ divinely plumbed and fulfilled.' In a similar spirit, in his commemoration of Bob Fox Illich wrote: '[the] joint celebration of the cross we accept as ours is the beginning of real life – and the presence of just one among the celebrants who knows that that cross is the Cross of Christ, bring the Church into being.'[133]

132 As reported by Domenico Farias in his *In the Shadow of Jerome* (in Hoinacki & Mitcham, 2002: 69).

133 The quotations by Guardini were taken from Guardini, Romano, (2005 [1937]). *Il Signore. Riflessioni sulla persona e sulla vita di Gesù Cristo.* Milano - Brescia: Vita e

In light of these considerations, one may now take a fresh look at *The Powerless Church*, especially where it says the following: 'the reaction to transition is very ambiguous. It can allow for new insights, can open new perspectives and therefore confront the person with new awareness of choice. In other words, development can be a setting for salvation which leads to resurrection. But also transition can reduce a bewildered individual to a defensive self-centeredness, to dependence and aggression; it can lead into the agony of a lived destruction of life, straight into hell.' What emerges here is the way in which 'the Christian celebration of the experience of change' is essentially adapted to the *act of dying* (as confirmed by this passage: 'What happens to the intimacy of a person when his familiar surroundings suddenly disappear, and with them the symbols he reveres?', with all that follows); just as was the case with that action, moreover, it ended up being confronted with a radical dilemma, which Illich had no hesitation in defining as either hell or resurrection. It was 'the reaction of the human heart', 'this heart' that set 'the objective value' of that experience; the Christians' ability to partake in its "drama", in the same way and at the same time as they partook in the Lord's death, that was ultimately the real object of its 'Christian celebration'. In this context, only change (*i.e.* death) and change alone could become a redeeming experience, provided it was seen in light of the cross. That experience was to be con-celebrated in the time segment in which time stands still, the one commonly known as 'creative leisure', and was encouraged by Illich's *Call to Celebration*; it implicitly referred back to liturgical time, more specifically to the liturgy of the Eucharist.

Indeed, 'change' was now a 'sign of the times', the mark

Pensiero - Morcelliana, pp. 482-483; those by Illich were drawn from *Aesthetic and Religious Experience* (in Part IV) and from his *Commentary* (in McMahon, 1989: 158).

of an era from which no existence, whether individual or collective, was able to escape any longer. In that new context, mankind's *coming of age* became a real possibility, and was actually fulfilled. The "sacred canopy"[134] that used to paralyse the traditional view of the cosmos had come crumbling down: although some might still have use for a "stopgap God", the enlightened acknowledgement that an irreversible rift had occurred in human history, and that such a rift had to be seen in light of God's and mankind's freedom, necessarily had to make the Church realise that its role was no longer to support or fix that "canopy", or to manage and direct the changes that sporadically took place in its shadow. Rather, 'the church interprets to modern man development as a growth into Christ': that meant into His cross, given that the experiences of transition, uprooting, self-loss, and position-taking had become universal, that 'interculturality' had become the mark of an era, and that every individual was a missionary of sorts for themselves and the others ('the future has already broken into the present. We each live in many times. The present of one is the past of the another, and the future of yet another', as may be read in *A Call for Celebration* and other similar texts).[135] Only the Church could evangelise that experience so that in the distress of the transition 'a non-thematic awareness of the significance of the incarnation emerge[d]: an ability to say one great "Yes" to the experience of life'. That 'Yes' to the movement's divine and human principle itself, the removal of hereditary necessity, the 'new awareness of choice', one's readiness for the adventure of the unforeseen and for 'the wondrous surprise of [its] coming, [its] advent', all ultimately bore

134 See Berger, Peter L., (1967). *The Sacred Canopy. Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion.* Garden City (NY): Doubleday, 1967.

135 The most explicit text in this sense was *The Secular City and the Structure of Religious Life* (see Part VI). Notice however the clarity of thought with which Jim Morton analysed this aspect in his *Introduction to The Church, Change and Development* (see Part III).

the name of *love*. It was in that sense that 'the development of humanity tends toward the realization of the kingdom, which is Christ already present in the church': it was only on that condition that it did not head for perdition instead ('growing dependence, solitude, and cravings which result from our self-alienation in things and systems and heroes'), an ever-present, concrete risk throughout history.[136] It may be noted here that there is nothing to support the contention that such a conceptual framework was sensibly altered in the following decades. In his old age Illich owned up to having suffered the temptation 'of cursing God's Incarnation',[137] and also accused human freedom of a radical deviation (*i.e.* of having given itself up, and of having handed itself over to those demonic powers that are always ready to break loose whenever that decision has to be taken). That still does not belie the fact that both crisis and change possessed a categorically positive value, as it were: they corresponded to the ontological (and therefore also axiological) primacy of existence over essence, despite the ambiguity of their implementation as deliverance or enslavement, and as the kingdom of God or its perversion. To interpret this underlying premise as *a priori* "progressiveness" would, of course, be ludicrous, and it would be at least just as absurd, if not more, to mistake Illich's preaching for programmatic anti-modernism. If the "typological" link which Illich envisaged between Incarnation (the Surprise *par excellence*) and Secularisation (the era *par excellence* which started 'the experience of life' all over again) is not taken into account, one cannot possibly understand the link of *simultaneous* realisation and perversion which he painfully investigated in his later years in the relationship between the Gospel

136 These excerpts are also from *The Powerless Church* (see Part I).

137 See Cayley, 2005: 61.

and Modernity.[138]

The relationship between the 'celebration of change' and the kingdom of God also requires a special effort to be fully comprehended. The kingdom of God, always 'already present' as something 'always about to come' ('in this moment, at death, at parousia', with no noticeable qualitative difference between these various events), was apparently nothing more than the mere process of becoming as seen from the point of view of God, that same God who was alive and an endless source of life; 'celebration' thus meant welcoming that same process with praise, or perhaps one ought to say with faith, since Life had manifested itself to mankind. A consequence of this was that Illich did not believe in the existence of two separate histories, one sacred and one secular, driven by two separate agents, such as for instance the Church and mankind. Echoing one of his literary influences, namely Joseph Scheeben and his *Mysterien*, and in the same vein also Solovëv,[139] with whom he became acquainted early on, he envisaged only one kind of history that was at once divine and human, and which stretched between God's incarnation and Man's divinisation, with no separate or privileged place reserved for the Church. 'Men form Church, […] they form community, even *before* the Gospel has been announced to them', he once stated;[140] 'what the Church contributes through evangelization is

138 This is the underlying theme in Cayley (2005). In his writings on Illich Charles Taylor did not quite manage to properly bring to the fore the ambivalence highlighted above (see Taylor, Charles, (2007). *The Secular Age*. Cambridge (MA) – London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, pp. 737-744; however, see a different approach to this on p. 158).

139 The progressive development of this line of thought would find its fairly natural conclusion with Teilhard de Chardin: although Illich never mentioned him, in 1966 the *Cif Reports* published the enthusiastic homage paid to him by Dom Helder Câmara (see 'Theilard de Chardin, man of love.' *Cif Reports* V, 1, January 1966, later also in *Cidoc Cuaderno* 40, 1969, pp. 1/26-29).

140 See the interview *The Meaning of Cuernavaca* in the Appendix. For the similarities with Rahner's thought displayed by these and other comparable statements, see the notes to *The Powerless Church*.

like the laughter in the joke. Two hear the same story – but one gets the point'. The Gospel, in other words, safeguarded a further, more intimate dimension of the only extant reality, to which it also provided access: its *meaning* (it is rather telling that the leap from reality to such a dimension was said to be triggered by *laughter*).[141] Faith, for its part, revealed itself to be a special kind of intensity within that life, an intensity called *awareness*. 'I am continually aware of the fact that the Christian message, at least for me in my personal life, is mostly a call to a deeper awareness, a deeper and more full taste of the social reality within which I live',[142] Illich stated in an outline of his activity at CIDOC. The fact that that centre had a civil statute and a secular work programme, as has been shown, was not especially important: even the secular domain, as such, was not allocated any specific "space". This is further confirmed by *A Call for Celebration*, which did not display any religious connotations, nor did suggest tasks that were sensibly different from the ones which *The Powerless Church* had envisaged for the Church. Although it was called upon to discard the power it had historically exercised, given that history had now changed its course, 'the church understood as our celebration of our shared awareness that the kingdom is now about to come right here among us' was still actively present wherever there were human beings who loved and lived genuinely.[143] This, of course, despite the fact that only believers were granted 'an awareness of the God-

141 On this point, as well as on most of what has been discussed above, see also the comments made by Giorgio Agamben in his foreword 'Laughter and the Kingdom' to the volume by Borremans and Samuel (2018: vi-xii).

142 As stated in the interview given to *Christianity & Crisis* (see the Appendix).

143 'The Church, very rightly claims about herself what is true of humanity as a whole. She knows that those who are saved are saved because, in a way, they belong to her. The Kingdom among us is the Church. There is no question that the best, the truly loving and living members of humanity are a sign of a love beyond, a sign of revelation. In other words, men who really love are, for the believer, a sign of God's love.' In *The Meaning of Cuernavaca* (see the Appendix).

man or the man-God', and also 'of the lack of limit in love and in betrayal':[144] that is, of the endless and unfathomable character of the alternative involved.

In consideration of the above, one may easily understand why the debate recounted by Murray remained fairly peripheral to the elaboration of Illich's thought. Since the celebration envisaged the coincidence of the 'density of the Incarnation' with the eschatological event itself – or, to be more precise, the two bordered and trespassed on each other at the same time – there could be no relationship of prefiguration or falsification between them, as the agenda of that debate conversely dictated; instead, there was intrinsic reciprocity. With the proviso that the kingdom was not to be a human project based on social planning and the engineering of the future, it already came into being as soon as someone said yes to change, was ready to welcome what was surprising, harboured love towards life, and acted as a neighbour to a stranger, regardless of what adversities one might come up against. With the proviso that the kingdom was not seen as a vertical interruption and a violent intrusion in human history, on the other hand, the density of the flesh, of the senses, of the relationships, of the decisions taken at every turn – in a word, of the redeemed nature – could all, in fact, come to awareness. It thus becomes easier to understand how Illich managed to interpret the 'Weber-Barth constellation' in a Catholic perspective. He saw it rise above the horizon of the end of Christendom, over a landscape marked by mankind's definitive emancipation from religion's tutelage and by the ensuing purification of all transcendency-related notions and imagery: despite this, his dialectics did not become tragic. What the mediation of religion could no longer achieve – it is quite likely that on the Catholic side nobody has ever attempted to pursue Bonhoeffer's programme for 'irreligious Christianity'

144 Thus in the interview given to *Christianity & Crisis* (see the Appendix).

with as much rigour – could still be achieved by mysticism. In Illich's view, however, mysticism as based on one's identification with Jesus's experience of living was exactly the kingdom's collective experience and celebration. 'The Gospel's description of the kingdom includes essential elements that are used when describing the mystical experience. It adds and makes some elements explicit. It adds the social dimension: the kingdom is among us; it adds a para-temporal dimension: fulfilled but not yet accomplished – this means, under the sign of the cross. It makes realism explicit: the kingdom already exists among us in a social sense, and it consists in the progress of love. Hence, it is profoundly *social* and *personal*' (emphasis added).' It is probably this nuance that marked out Illich's thought more clearly against the ones formulated by other contemporary theologians, with whom he otherwise tended to be in agreement.[145]

XI. As may be gleaned from the patchwork of references included here (most of which are excerpts from Illich's speeches and interviews, and quite often from some enigmatic passages in his writings), this long excursus has been made necessary by the fact that Illich seldom dealt with theological or phil-

145 This passage may be found in *Aesthetic and Religious Experience*, op. cit. Illich's convergence of ideas with Harvey Cox (see Cox, Harvey, (1965). *The Secular City. Secularization and Urbanization in Theological Perspective*. New York: McMillan) was especially significant and far-reaching, particularly if it is considered that before 1968 they basically worked independently of one another. This notwithstanding, it is worth noting that Cox showed no interest in mysticism even when he touched upon it, as was the case with his *The Feast of Fools* (1969). *A theological Essay on Festivity and Fantasy* (Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press, 1969); nonetheless, in the *Preface* to that book he still acknowledged 'Ivan Illich and the students at the Center for Intercultural Documentation in Cuernavaca, Mexico, [for having] provided a festive input to [his] thinking during the Summer 1968.' Illich probably owed this characteristic feature of his thought to Guardini and Maritain's influence. Illich's theme of the 'kingdom' and his interpretation of it ('social and personal'), on the other hand, differentiated his thought from that strand within the "theology of secularisation" which identified "God" with the "the depth of being" (see Robinson, John A.T. (1963). *Honest to God*. London: SCM Press LTD, who followed Tillich, Paul, (1948). *The Shaking of the Foundations*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons), or with the "the sum of the highest values" (see Fromm).

osophical issues directly, and never hid his embarrassment when confronted with concepts and formulations that might end up being accepted as normative and universally valid. His statements were usually taken to refer to a given situation with which he was directly familiar; they appeared to be more akin to acts, almost gestures made in a context that allowed for them and could benefit from them. Of course, they did not happen in a vacuum: they were in fact supported and bolstered by a philosophical framework, such as the one that has been at least partially reconstructed here. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that Illich displayed towards speculative thinking a reserve, or one may even say an estrangement, that did not stem so much from "intellectual psychology" as from "religious" conviction. There were many preconditions that may have contributed to this inclination of his; a fairly important one among them could have been for instance his adherence, whether spontaneous, pondered, or both, to a biblical view of the "world". For once, his Jewish extraction could be included as a potentially contributing factor; that being the case, it would then become possible to draw what could undoubtedly be a very rewarding parallel with Father Lorenzo Milani. For the time being, it may suffice to borrow the words written by Guardini, the master whom Illich revered: 'We tend to see Christianity proper as a kind of system or world structure. The New Testament and the early Christian writers saw it as God's acting. [Our usual] way of seeing things, which is ultimately rather static, may lead us to forget that the true shape of our existence is God's activity. It is that shape that gives everything its meaning and its characteristics. [...] Inasmuch as Christianity ceases to be taken for granted, and becomes once again a debated subject, the biblical view of Christian existence, according to which human beings are included in God's activity, will also be able to make its presence felt once

again.'[146] Considering oneself to be part of God's activity as well as an anticipating interpretation of it could be advanced as the historical and existential clue to Illich's personality, at least as far as his public life is concerned. After all, it would be the equivalent of what his own religious thought exalted as the primacy of liturgical *actio* (the commemoration of God's actions) over all other juridical and dogmatic frameworks.

In this perspective, the texts that have been examined so far should also be seen as linked to a specific context: since their author conceived them as such, they cannot be readily generalised, or even systematised, as comments passed after some length of time inevitably tend to do. More to the point, it will come as no surprise that the writings associated with the 1967 campaign, the first to be fully "exoteric", could be considered a false start of sorts. That would count as his third false start, after the batch of "pastoral" writings from 1955 and 1956, which were in any case published under a pseudonym, and after the missiological ones from the period between 1958 and 1964; the publication of this third group, which dealt with ecclesiological topics, was suddenly discontinued half-way through the year, and was never resumed even though it meant discarding a piece of work that had already been concluded.[147] The fact that an informal veto from the Pope was enough to put a stop to them[148] sufficiently proves that they were intrinsically conceived for a specific community at a well-defined moment in time: their surrounding context was clear-cut, and

146 See Guardini, Romano. (1997) *Glaubenserkenntnis. Versuche zur Unterscheidung und Vertiefung*. Mainz – Paderborn: Matthias-Gruenewald Verlag - Verlag Ferdinand Schoeningh, pp. 98-99. This text, which dates to 1944, was undoubtedly known to Illich as a young man. *Cfr*. Guardini, Romano. (1953) *The Faith and Modern Man*. New York: Pantheon Books, pp. 80-81.

147 Thus in *How Will We Pass on Christianity?*, op. cit.

148 As Illich clarified in a letter dated February 1974 which he sent to Franco Gualdrini, a former fellow student at *Collegio Capranica* who had by then become its rector.

once they were disjointed and removed from it they simply lost their *raison d'être*. It further shows that Illich did not see himself as the spokesman of internal "dissent" within the post-conciliar Church, even though many in Europe may have considered him to be as such; finally, it demonstrates that he had no wish to be an 'author of books', never mind a dissident one (it was never his intention to cause either scandal or controversy; indeed, the re-publication of those writings as part of *Celebration of Awareness* took place in a discreet, almost documentary fashion, if it is considered that in that volume they were accompanied, and in a way neutralised, by a number of texts of an altogether different nature and spirit). Of course, Illich's attitude at the time was perhaps also determined by a measure of prudence, since 1967 was the year in which reactionary conservatives, in Mexico and elsewhere, in the clergy and in other ranks, began to display growing signs of impatience with him; what is more, the canonical investigations concerning him, which CELAM had not been able to prevent, were proceeding apace in the background with CAL's full support.[149] Nonetheless and despite everything, the 1968 "trial" contributed, in fact, to shed further light on the defendant's underlying attitude in both his actions and his writings. Indeed, he had already borne witness to what was at stake well before the proceedings against him were even initiated. If it is considered that at the time of his "prosecution" he had already spent twelve years living off his own work, in a secular legal framework, in a condition of extraterritoriality, and on the fringes of ecclesiastical control, it may become clear why he came to harbour hopes such as the ones he described in *The Vanishing Clergyman*: 'May we pray for an increase of priests who choose "radical" secularization? For priests who leave the Church in order to pioneer the church of the future? For priests who, faithfully dedicated to and lov-

149 As Scatena thoroughly documented (see 2006: 270-322).

ing the Church, risk misunderstanding and suspension? For priests full of hope, capable of such actions without becoming hard and embittered? For extraordinary priests, willing to live today the ordinary life of tomorrow's priests?' This lived-through "prophetic" dimension, which was in agreement with the practice of the "celebration of change" outlined above, was what informed Illich's choices in the difficult circumstances at the end of the 1960s; there is therefore no point in countering that after fifty years his prophecy has apparently still remained unfulfilled – or perhaps it has merely not even started being fulfilled yet. Indeed, a more or less successful prediction does not amount to a real prophecy: what really constitutes one is the risk of taking decisions on history's stage, on behalf of God's actions, in the conflict of human will. In this specific instance, withdrawing from conflict was the only way to radicalise it, and by extension to clarify the positions involved in it. Since Illich did not want to 'stay in the structure in order to subvert it [but rather to] leave in order to *live* the model of the future',[150] he had no reason to disobey the Pope's desires, or to exacerbate a controversy which the Catholic Church appeared to have every intention of settling in court. Moreover, there was no point in stubbornly pursuing an abstract debate, now that its proponent was about to implement its thesis and its corollaries in his own life as a priest without clergy. If no lay people were going to be authorised to celebrate the sacred mysteries, then there would be at least one clergyman who would refuse to do it in their stead.

These considerations, which come rather easily to the comprehensive view afforded by hindsight, should however not lead one to believe that Illich's transition was either fast or painless, or even voluntarily guided by him. There are two kinds of factors that conclusively exclude this possibility. The first is the slow and painful succession of events that occupied

150 These excerpts were taken from *The Vanishing Clergyman* (Part I).

the whole of 1968, which began to gain momentum only at the beginning of 1969, and only after the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith instructed Papal nuncios to organise the "boycotting" of CIDOC's courses. This "interdict", which the press made public despite its lack of official motivation, forced Illich to react by defending the reputation of the centre and its collaborators. He was left with no alternative other than counterattacking by making public the proceedings' documentation, thereby exposing just how arbitrary the Congregation was in the fulfilment of its functions; as everybody knows, the ensuing "scandal" spread throughout the Catholic world like wildfire and caused quite a sensation. In consequence of this, the Congregation was eventually forced to go back on its decisions; for his part, Illich had inevitably become, in the meantime, a universal symbol of controversy, and was forced to make permanent the suspension *a divinis* which he had freely imposed on himself a year before.[151] In fact, his progressive withdrawal from the public exercise of his priestly duties had already started in Puerto Rico, firmly convinced as he was that the performance of public tasks (such as his participation in governmental planning organisations), while perfectly legitimate for secular believers, could be dangerous for the Church if it involved a member of its hierarchy.[152] These forms of self-restraint became even more necessary after 1966 in order to protect CIDOC's secular nature and independence, which as has been shown were that institute's defining features. In 1970, well after the controversy examined above,

151 The relevant documentation may be found in Ocampo (1969); a summary of it has been included in a note attached to the letter addressed *To the Prefect of the Holy Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Cardinal Franjo Šeper* (see Part VI).

152 See Cayley, 1992: 98-99. Seen in these terms, this approach was in perfect line with canonical norms; Illich, however, wanted to apply it not only to all public technical and administrative activities, but also to every kind of interference in a country's political life on the Church's part, unless it was explicitly aimed at denouncing patent injustices.

he still felt inclined to give a statement to *Der Spiegel* to the effect that 'his involvement in Latin America's problems' did not allow him 'to remain in the Church's service'.[153] It is almost odd to notice that while he did not attach any particular importance to *conflict* as a political thinker, he was conversely extremely self-conscious about it when it came to the opposite of politics: the Church as a mystery and a miracle of unity, the representatives of which had to refrain from taking part in intrinsically *dissociating* activities such as political engagement. Having said this, the point is that Illich had wanted to become a priest and remained one, that he had envisaged his abstention from the divine mysteries as limited in scope (the public domain) and duration,[154] and that when he finally had to accept it as definitive he must have looked upon it as a necessary, but extreme and painful step. His proposal to declericalize the Church had in his view only historical, juridical and (within these terms) ecclesiological relevance: it had no bearing whatsoever on the sacramental and spiritual side of the matter. One should therefore see his refusal to ask for a reduction to the lay state and his desire to continue to fulfil his obligations towards celibacy and the recitation of the breviary not only in an ecclesial light, as a challenge to the articulation in clergy and laity itself, but also in a spiritual and existential perspective, indeed, as a kind of daily, endless *memento mori*.

The material which he wrote in those months also reveals, upon examination, a tormented transition. The three texts that have survived from 1968 were affected by the veto issued after *The Vanishing Clergyman*, and were consequently his first to be of an exclusively secular character. They concentrated on fairly diverse topics, and mainly confined themselves to delving into, or expanding on, some of his speeches

153 See '*Can violence be Christian?*' in the Appendix.

154 See the letter addressed *To don Sergio, Bishop of Cuernavaca* in Part VI.

and writings from 1967: a clear sign that in the troubled year of 1968 Illich had not managed to refocus his thinking on a new organic project yet, either because he did not have one, or else because the one he had was not a priority compared to safeguarding CIDOC's work and existence. Of those writings it was especially the first one, the article entitled *The Futility of Schooling*,[155] that marked a clean break with its most direct antecedent, the speech given by Illich in Puerto Rico on the need to reorganise the island's educational system.[156] It may be pointed out, however, that its original title specified in *Latin America*, thereby confining the disquieting diagnosis it contained to that fairly exotic place. Secondly, it should be clarified that although that text was well-researched and cleverly argued, there was nothing in it that could suggest at the time (April 1968) that the diagnosis would later be extended to the children of the *Saturday Review*'s readership to whom the text was originally addressed, or that shortly afterwards, between 1970 and 1972, the 'deschooling' project would become of the utmost importance for Illich. After all, *Violence: A Mirror for Americans* appeared on the *America* magazine only a week later,[157] and was soon compounded by the memorable *Yankee, Go Home* speech that Illich delivered to CIASP students:[158] they were far more critical of "US ideology" than the previous article, and actually openly accused it of being the real instigator behind "missionary" neo-colonialism just as *The Seamy Side of Charity* had done (only in much harsher tones). As for Illich's essay on birth control in Latin America, the 1967 palimpsest to which the author made reference possibly in an effort to allay all suspicions of any undue encroach-

155 See *The Futility if Schooling* in Part I.

156 See *The Redistribution of Educational Tasks Between Schools and Other Organs of Society* in Part VI.

157 See Part I.

158 See Part III.

ment by him on the Pope's magisterium (see *Humanae Vitae*, July 1968), has not survived;[159] what is certain is that that text introduced yet another scenario, in which Illich's concern for that continent's destiny and the nature of his humanistic approach took on positive overtones for the first time.

An underlying continuity between these works and the season that had just come to an end is moreover to be found, unsurprisingly, in Illich's conceptual framework: even without the factor represented by the Catholic Church, lingering central themes of interest to him were still the contact between cultures, contact-related changes, and the role which religion, understood as ideology and idolatry, played in the whole process. In the above-mentioned *Violence: A Mirror for Americans* Illich drew on Toynbee's model of 'war and class', and portrayed the convergence between the US's 'internal proletariat' (*i.e.* racial minorities) and the 'external' one (*i.e.* the large majority of the earth's inhabitants, who live outside the handful of developed countries) as a violent reaction to the 'challenge' posed by a 'universal State': a civilisation in its imperial phase, in fact, which according to Toynbee's own model should really have been in a condition of decadence. Illich did not specify which 'new religion' would eventually destroy that declining civilisation, but he did identify the "idol" to which it had calamitously entrusted itself in its ongoing phase of spiritual crystallisation, namely the demonic face of its own good intentions. The real problem was not so much the naïve subordination of that civilisation's 'do-gooderism' to arms and money, or the equally naïve promotion of its *way of life* as a universal standard of human dignity: it was in fact that said way of life was to be protected, rather than questioned in view of the abysmal inequality it occasioned, but it could not 'be protected without being expanded.' Behind and

159 See *Sexual Power and Political Potency* in Part I.

within that spectacular waste of human generosity skulked a systematic process of corruption of the human heart that coaxed it to cooperate to its own destruction, all in the interest of a minority that '[would] not tire until the superiority of their quasi-religious persuasion [was] accepted by the underdogs'; once this was achieved, the less-privileged would then become permanently and irrevocably nailed to the fate of their condition. It was just for that reason that the rejection of the idol, which was pushing its way – either stealthily or explosively – through slums, *favelas*, and the Asian jungle, confronted the dominant civilisation with a matter of life and death, and by extension of further violence. Was there any chance of overcoming it, possibly with a positive, creative solution? Illich, who disagreed with the "Zealots" in favour of armed struggle as much as he did with the "Herodians" within Latin America's ruling class (these categories are also Toynbee's),[160] believed that both parties to the conflict could in fact reach a higher degree of awareness, responsibility, and social creativity, and it was to that end that he (re-) envisaged CIDOC's role: 'A critical examination of the effect that intense social change has on the intimacy of the human heart in Latin America – he wrote – is a fruitful way to insight into the intimacy of the human heart in the United States.'[161]

A rather similar pattern informed Illich's two other works from 1968. His denunciation of *schooling* as futile, which was not primarily addressed to a US readership, urged the most developed countries, including the dominant US, not to impose on everybody else a model of compulsory universal education: while it might have worked in their transition to industrialisation, it had no hope of doing so in those areas where the systemic "underdevelopment" that regularly

160 These may be found in Toynbee, 1943, Chapter 10.

161 These excerpts are from *Violence: A Mirror for Americans*, op. cit.

followed industrialisation had already set in. Exporting such a model not only entailed costs poor economies could hardly afford, but also led to an actual polarisation of the huge sums invested in favour of tiny minorities of already privileged people; in consequence of this, the majority became intoxicated with the poison of a frustration that had no possible redemption – except, of course, through violence, to which 'the establishment of *any* religion [had] always led.'[162] It was therefore necessary to find *alternativas* to the present order, and that text was Illich's first attempt to contribute new important ideas in this sense. In the same vein, Illich's *Sexual Power and Political Potency* did not so much target the variously motivated, traditionalist views on birth control as a gauche attempt at "modernising" Latin America on the basis of values and attitudes that belonged to the international bourgeoisie, and which had no hope of being plausibly implemented in that continent. Regardless of what was at stake, be it the Catholic doctrine's "human nature" or the liberal model's greedy anthropology, Illich still believed that 'the use of ideology to push or oppose family planning [was] always a call to idolatry and, therefore, anti-human.' It was something, in other words, meant to either interrupt change, or to "normalise" it as expedient to immobility or repetition (for these are indeed the idol's functions), with the resulting exhaustion of the creative energy that can only arise from the adult *awareness* of a given context, a given problem, and a horizon of potential freedom. The dilemma posed by Illich concerning 'this child' in today's society was whether they would plan their families in the name of 'fewer babies and more things' or of 'the joy of life' once they grew up to become urbanised proletarian adults.[163] He proposed a massive campaign in accordance with the prin-

162 *The Futility of Schooling,* op. cit.

163 See *Sexual Power and Political Potency*, op. cit.

ciples of Freire's political pedagogy to educate adults on birth control, as a stepping stone to enable both individuals and communities to become more deeply aware of the potential at their disposal in determining every other contemporary social process; he believed this to be the only realistic solution, as well as the only truly revolutionary one. Although there is no real supporting evidence, it is something of this kind that is meant whenever Illich's "humanism" is mentioned: 'a revolution inside each person's head', as he explained himself, 'that can only be construed as a social process.'[164]

XII. It was only in the late spring of 1969, *after* he gave up his ministry for good, that his range of interests was gradually narrowed down to adopt a more clearly defined direction. Once the mediatic fuss raised by the "interdict" began to subside, it became evident that the educational issue had turned into a veritable campaign against schools, as first witnessed by the impassioned speech Illich delivered in June to the new graduates from Puerto Rico.[165] That address, together with the solemn one he delivered to Bolivian teachers six months later (*i.e.* in January 1970),[166] did not just make it patent that his deschooling plan now concerned Latin America and the poorest countries in general, but also that it had ceased to be a cheap diversion for New York intellectuals. He was now entrusting it directly and exclusively to (well-educated, it goes without saying) Latin American elites, so that they could embrace its heretical spirit, experiment with its practical suggestions, and develop new original solutions. Those speeches witnessed, in other words, the resumption of his active militancy two years

164 Thus in the exchange contained in the interview to *Der Spiegel* 'Can violence be Christian?', op. cit. (see the Appendix).

165 See 'School: the sacred cow', see Part I.

166 See *I maestri boliviani a capo della rivoluzione culturale in America Latina* in Part III.

after *The Vanishing Clergyman*: it was almost as if the energy expressed within the Church, which an unexpected obstacle had compressed, had found an outlet through which it could now burst free. Although the deschooling issue began to recur in his writings from the second half of 1969 onwards, Illich's militancy was not confined to it. Indeed, his criticism of the educational institution became part – albeit as a major, almost paradigmatic example – of a more comprehensive criticism of all the institutions within the world's "system" (based on the unavoidable joint occurrence of development and underdevelopment); those institutions existed in his eyes exclusively in order to uphold that very system (*i.e.* expand it). This new approach emerged clearly in *Planned Poverty*, a text which had to be mentioned early on in the present discussion, since its importance in Illich's work can hardly be underestimated:[167] suffice to say that he included it at the beginning of the Spanish language version of *Celebration of Awareness* for the Latin American market, and he later republished it in 1978 as part of *Toward a History of Needs*.[168] It summarised his experiences in the previous decade, and outlined his projects for the oncoming one: first of all, his call for a 'counter-research' on alternative solutions for Latin America's development (which was indeed to become CIDOC's new "trademark") and secondly, the parallel goal of 'revolutionising the institutions'. In agreement with Berger-Luckmann's sociology, he held that institutions were social and mental before they were political; on the other hand, in disagreement with Berger-Luckmann he was also convinced that their revolutionization should not be understood as the replacement of the old 'sacred canopy'

167 'Planned Poverty: The End Result of Technical Assistance' (see note 31 above, and Part I). The text was also included in *Bolivia y la revolución cultural*, published in February 1970, with the title 'Alternativas a la escuela' (see Part II). On its long editorial history, which continues into the 21st century, see the *References*.

168 *Toward a History of Needs*.

with a new one, but rather as the definitive relegation of that kind of function to a past historical stage in human history.

The 'cultural revolution' which was proclaimed both in *Planned Poverty* and in the related *A Constitution for a Cultural Revolution*,[169] —the "manifesto" dating to 1969 that concluded *Celebration of Awareness* — was inspired by a kind of visionary disenchantment, as it were: the notion that mankind could indeed be delivered from its myths.[170] A clear indication in this sense was his ostentatiously realistic approach: it seemed as if he intended to counter the trafficking of illusions with the coarseness of a given area's socio-economic conditions, as well as with the interests of a large majority of its relevant population that were seemingly the only factor capable of making a real difference in that area's transformation. A further indication was provided by his call to let the social imagination run free: it was an essential step in his 'counterfoil research' on institutions such as the school system, the national health service, and the transport network, the future agenda of which was already outlined in the text in question. Indeed, he believed that also those institutions '[could not] be protected without being expanded', and that they could in turn do so only by strengthening the monopoly they already had on the planning, packaging, and distribution of the products that reify human needs, in which process the latter were reduced to mere subordinate variables of those same products, and mankind's very ability to conceive different possibilities was annihilated. The much-needed fresh start consequently lay in the secession, self-emancipation, and creative mobilisation of new intellectuals and social actors, who might be ready to launch on an adventure

169 See Part I.

170 An 'ongoing cultural revolution', which 'was bound to be betrayed by both Roosevelt's and Lenin's followers', was mentioned by Illich in the interview he gave to *Der Spiegel* (see the Appendix).

without precedents (with the sole partial exception, perhaps, of Gandhi's enterprise). Potential participants were expected to be allured by the prospect, which Illich soberly evoked at the end of his text, of 'outwitting the "developed" countries', thereby becoming the unexpected leaders of human development; the solutions adopted in the process would be 'poor', but would nonetheless arouse the 'envy' of technologically advanced societies, and would eventually also end up acting as a model for them. Although the 'cultural revolution' could only really begin where underdevelopment had not got a hold of people's minds and hearts yet, it also had to be pursued in those very areas where underdevelopment had originated, and the challenge mounted by the most impoverished regions had to become generalised as a global alternative. Proof of the correctness of this interpretation is supplied by the three *Beecher Lectures* in Yale dating to February 1970, which first introduced the goal of also deschooling the First World as his own priority. In sum, Illich also underwent a verifiable evolutionary line in the educational domain: from an initial, mainly ecclesiastical environment (on which his earliest writings concentrated, as demonstrated by the present collection) his interest shifted to a strictly Latin American agenda, and later developed into a more generalised approach. In this process, he first questioned the universality and universalism of Western values and then proceeded to place their very origin and motivation on trial.

XIII. The year 1970 witnessed the full development of the intellectual workshop that would originate *Deschooling Society*, on which there is little need to linger (also in consideration of the fact that the texts which would eventually become part of that book in more or less unaltered form have not been included here). When *Celebration of Awareness* first became available for sale in September 1970, *Deschooling Society* was

essentially ready, and it was only due to a shrewd editorial strategy that its publication was delayed until the late spring of 1971.[171] Compared to that book, the publication of *Celebration of Awareness* was almost a necessary act: it constituted the unavoidable presentation of an "author of books" at the inception of his career, it summarised his past, especially its most recent part, and provided the most appropriate transition to what was seemingly becoming Illich's real goal, namely the de-schooling campaign that acted as the active paradigm of the 'cultural revolution' he had invoked. In this sense that book marked a threshold between an end and a beginning, even though one may perhaps speak of a new beginning only inasmuch as it brought to a conclusion a course that had already turned to new horizons. There are in fact some clues that justify this interpretation. As early as 1969, Illich authorised the preparation and publication of a very detailed file on the Vatican's "interdict", which contained extensive documentation on the whole crisis with the Holy See starting from 1966.[172] Between November 1969 and July 1970 he re-edited six of the yearly *CIF Reports* from the 1962-1967 period as six *CIDOC Cuadernos*,[173] and proceeded to salvage his missiological writings by packing them in a short book (*The Church, Change and Development*, published in June 1970);[174] this was entrusted to Jim Morton, a friend and an extraordinary interlocutor of his, in the same spirit in which Illich had handed him his own chalice when he renounced the exercise of priesthood. The *Presentación* of the *Ensajos*

171 Indeed, 'The Dawn of Epimethean Man and Other Essays', *CIDOC Cuaderno* 54, began to circulate in the autumn of 1970; it contained all the essays which would later be included in *Deschooling Society* (see Cayley, 1992: 73).

172 See Ocampo 1969.

173 *CIDOC Cuaderno* 36-41.

174 See Part III.

sobre la transcendencia,[175] another collection of Illich's writings that CIDOC would include a year later in its *Sondeos* series, also took place in September 1970, the same month in which *Celebration of Awareness* was published; a month later even the dated *Report* on *The Spiritual Care of Puerto Rican Migrants*, which had emerged from the 1955 conference and which Illich had edited together with Father Fitzpatrick and Father William Ferree, was reprinted as part of the same *Sondeos* series.[176] Within a few months, say, between June and October 1970, a comparatively exhaustive documentation on Illich's last fifteen years was assembled: this should of course be seen as Illich's way of 'gently but firmly' reclaiming a whole *curriculum vitae* for himself, but also as the sign of his inner inclination to let 'bygones be bygones' and move on. It is probably in this light that his first book should be seen, and its preparation, which dated to the end of 1969, may possibly be interpreted as signalling the beginning of the previous season's end. Furthermore, the open letter which Illich sent to Pope Paul VI to harshly condemn the Church's silence on the systematic use of torture made by Brazil's military dictatorship was published in *Commonweal* on 4th September 1970, the day of his 44th birthday, and marked yet another turning point:[177] the establishment of a new, free and painful relationship with the Catholic Church.

If Illich's evolution outlined above has been reported correctly, it would seem appropriate to also include a careful examination of the Americas' specific historical context and their cultural and political debates in the reconstruction of his "militant" engagement's motivation and configuration. However, such an effort would, first of all, require detailed knowl-

175 See Part IV.

176 In volume 77 and 70 respectively.

177 See Part V.

edge of CIDOC's activity between 1968 and 1970, namely its scientific activities and their main participants, the courses it offered and the kind of students who usually attended them, the alliances it had across the two hemispheres and the surviving links, if any, to the Catholic Church. The answers to these points will unfortunately have to await better times. In the meantime, one may perhaps ask a few more questions: one could for instance wonder if all of Illich's writings should not (also) be seen as a critical contribution to the theology of liberation, which was already at an advanced stage of development after the Medellín conference held in August and September 1968. Illich agreed with many of the premises of the "liberationist" approach, but in all likelihood did not believe that the latter's developments were sufficiently radical; he most certainly did not appreciate the emphasis it placed on the Church's role, however modified, and he probably was not too fond of its theologising either, especially when it concerned issues that had already become eminently secular, and which now needed to be urgently tackled in a purely practical fashion. He was in favour of 'radical socialism', as he once told *Der Spiegel*, and he looked equally favourably upon the 'attempts to create a humanist front uniting Latin America's Christians and Marxists';[178] indeed, it is quite possible that the theologoumenon 'A Powerless Church' was formulated to support the development of just such attempts. On the other hand, his approach to that potential dialogue was rather more competitive than mimetic, as he would demonstrate during *Unidad Popular*'s experiment in Chile between 1970 and 1973. On an altogether different front, his Yale lectures, which initiated agitations to deschool the US, were, in all likelihood, intended for a young audience that had received their baptism by fire at the hands of the student movement of the early 1960s, had become radicalised thanks to anti-war protest, and had

178 'Can violence be Christian?', op. cit. (in the Appendix).

been instructed on anti-system positions by the apostles of "counterculture". Were there any real interlocutors for Illich in a movement that involved so many different generations, and which was not yet looking up to him as a guiding teacher, as it was to do only a few years later? Among the possible candidates it is hard to overlook the readership, not to mention the collaborators, of California's *Whole Earth Catalog* magazine, issued between 1968 and 1972.[179] In a more marginal position one could perhaps also include Europe's magazines (such as *Hochland*, *Temps modernes*, *Esprit* and *Testimonianze*) and research centres: the fact that at the beginning of 1970 Illich advocated (even though it would probably be more correct to say that he bemoaned the missed opportunity of) the wholesale transfer of Bologna's Centre of Documentation to '*alguna ciudad de América Latina*', which would have allowed that continent to have at last its own institute of general ecclesiastical and religious history as an indispensable precondition to develop a truly local theology, demonstrates that at the time he was still ready to encompass an extremely wide spectrum of interests within the scope of his 'counterfoil research'.[180]

XIV. There is at least one text that stands out, also from a theological point of view, as anomalous in what appears to be Illich's evolution towards a "consistent secularisation". It is a speech he gave in Lima in 1971 to an international Christian audience (there were however no Catholics, or at any rate they were not in the majority) that was engaged in Latin America's

179 Joe Shea's account of the trip he took to Cuernavaca in his quest for Ivan Illich, published by *The Village Voice* in August 1970, actually appears to prove that the New York circles' perception of Illich as 'a genuine scholar, mystic and revolutionary' was at the time still deeply influenced by the portrait of him which Francine du Plessix Gray had supplied in her work (see above; see also Joe Shea, (1970). 'In Quest of the Keys. The Life of Ivan Illich.' *The Village Voice*, August 13, pp. 14, 56, 58).

180 See the correspondence published as an Annex in Prodi (2016: 251-273), including the proposal Illich made to his correspondents in Bologna 'para un acto *radicalmente significativo*' (see p. 266).

educational field.[181] Its intended recipients and its religious slant should not come as a surprise, since that "pedal point", as it were, was somehow always present in Illich's thought on educational matters. What prompted his considerations on them (though perhaps not according to a strictly chronological order) was arguably his questioning of the link between knowledge and salvation as embedded in the catechisms at the time of the "confessionalisation" process and of the faith's missionary exportation. That original kernel of necessary truths, separate from experience and locked up in exemplary formulations, had arguably given rise, at a later stage, to the core of what is now known as a school curriculum: a repertory of intelligible, yet unimplemented essences, which were perhaps useful in the later stages of a mundane kind of life but which, for the time being, were merely functional to an unchangeable state of things. 'Deschooling the Church', as the Spanish translation of *The Lima Speech* read,[182] did not simply entail relieving that institution from the colonial burden of its educational system, nor did it strive to accelerate the demise of Christendom in Latin America through that process. It actually meant encouraging the Church to relinquish its doctrinaire transmission of the faith, rather than its doctrine, and especially to modify its understanding of faith (and salvation) as acquiescence to the catalogue of approved truths that were certified as such by the institution itself. Illich's immediate consonance with Freire's literacy method, which was based on community experience and aimed at the attainment of self-awareness and the necessary revolutionary change, may be better understood in this perspective. That method ultimately represented only a fragment of the overall

181 See Part V.

182 *La desescolarización de la Iglesia*, now also in Ivan Illich, (2006). *Obras reunidas*. Edited by Valentina Borremans and Javier Sicília. Mexico: Fondo de cultura económica, pp. 116-124.

process which, by disestablishing Catholic schools, was expected to eventually eliminate the identification of formal education with secular salvation (*i.e.* social privilege) which the Church's monopoly on education had forged. Once education was liberalised, it would open up plenty of opportunities for meaningful experiences of 'celebration' and 'humanisation' which would neither be separated from "the world of life" nor be condemned to replicate its given order.[183]

As early as the speech given in Puerto Rico in June 1969, nonetheless, Illich demonstrably believed that 'the school [had] become the established church of secular times',[184] which merely preserved and replicated, under the veneer of technical rationality, a legacy of functions and characteristics that belonged in fact to the past. The new religion it instilled (based on obedient consumerism and the sin of underconsumption) consequently had to undergo a process of demythification similar to the one experienced by Christianity in the "secular era"; as for the schools themselves, the new institution in charge of saving individuals (even though it was in fact leading them to greater alienation), had also to be 'disestablished' through an analogous process. Illich's regular employment in this context of the technical term designating the separation between Church and State was meant to signal that the institution of compulsory education had to be abolished, and that the schools' functions had to be redistributed among a variety of bodies, spaces, and educational practices within society, while preserving at the same time the individual's freedom to gain access to them at will. Thus, the end of the Age of Schooling had its *exemplum* in the end of Christendom,[185] as it were; this historical analogy between the

183 On this and other aspects of Illich's thought, see the *Introduzione* by Angelo Gaudio (Gaudio, Angelo, (2012). *Illich. Un profeta postmoderno*, Brescia: La Scuola, pp. 5-22).

184 'School: the sacred cow' (in Part I).

185 See the first of the *Beecher Lectures*.

Church and state schools as established institutions, however, was further compounded by a structural one. In the speech he gave at Yale university, Illich refined his analysis, and instead of concentrating on what schools manifestly did he chose to focus on what they actually were, or what they had at any rate become, in the hidden depths of common sense-perception in which they stealthily and undisturbedly sowed their (de-humanising) dogmas: that was exactly the same 'religious' function which the most recent theories on the sociology 'of knowledge' have ascribed to 'primary institutions'. In September 1970, while speaking to an audience of experts in that discipline in Salzburg, Illich claimed that 'bad religion' (*böse Religion*) could be successfully fought off and weeded out: all it took was the involvement of an inherently "nonreligious" factor that was, by its very nature, not amenable to that system. He identified that factor as the anti-idolatrous inspiration stemming from the Bible and the Gospel, which was already present in the Church in the shape of the Holy Spirit's activity that constantly regenerated it; which could also nonetheless be found outside the Church, in the creative disenchantment of a mankind which had now become adult enough to relentlessly get rid of its myths.[186]

The most important element in Illich's speech in Lima, however, was the fact that he seemed to have already moved a step beyond his own *Deschooling Society*, which had just been published. He dropped the distinction between education and schooling, together with all related hypotheses of a 'redistribution'; instead, he proceeded to put on trial the concept of education as a whole, the imposed "need" for it, and the relevant postulate – on the verge of being enshrined as

186 See *Die Schule als neue Weltreligion. Zum Phänomen der mythogenetischen Ritualstruktur in der sogenannten säkularisierten Gesellschaft.* In: Schatz, Oskar (ed.), (1971). *Hat die Religion Zukunft?*. Graz – Wien – Köln: Styria, pp. 206-216. See Part VI below.

indisputable – which dictated that every human being had to be "educated" in order to be able to live, and even before they began to do so. Illich chose a Christian audience to denounce not so much an institution or a number of them, as that new creed which was far more pervasive and dangerous than the one officiated within school precincts: indeed, he believed it to be part of a larger plan to make the World and Mankind all over again from scratch, and to establish '*el Reino del Consumo universal*' on earth as a kind of parallel, paranoid reality made up of perfectly engineered goods, services, subjects and relationships. It was for this reason that he begged the Churches 'in the name of God [to] denounce the idolatry of Progress', and to 'remind men that God [had] created a good world, and [had] given us the power to know and cherish it without the need of an intermediary'; he also asked them to 'refuse to cooperate in any attempt to create a manmade environment in which the life of all persons would depend on their having been clients of a service organization.' The alarm he raised no longer concerned (only) a change of religion, but rather a possible "anthropological mutation": an evolution of thought which, in an Italian context, was closely mirrored by the transition within a few years from Father Milani's criticism of compulsory education to Pier Paolo Pasolini's proposal to abolish it altogether (indeed, Italy could well offer a privileged vantage point as far as the analysis of this specific aspect is concerned). '*Ha llegado la hora de hacer saber el mensaje que nos ha sido revelado*',[187] Illich announced in apocalyptic terms, almost as if the point of no return had already been reached. It was once again to Christians and the world's poor, to those who voluntary chose to lead a life of sacrifice and marginalisation, and who 'worship[ped] their nameless and living God in the desert', that Illich attributed, with unprecedent-

187 "It is time to make known the message that has been revealed to us'. *La desescolarización de la Iglesia*, op cit., p. 123.

ed words, 'a crucial responsibility […] in the liberation of the world from idols of progress, development, efficiency, Gross National Product.'[188] What was being questioned, perhaps for the first time, was modernity *per se*: an unusual, uncommonly critical outcome for any theology of secularisation.

XV. Illich's short writings from the end of 1971, which already foreshadowed the developments of subsequent years, displayed a clearly identifiable new determination at work, set on delving deeper into his 'counter-research'. Rather than concentrating on these still unripe developments, it is perhaps best to linger a while longer on yet another speech he gave in that period. He delivered it to an audience of believers, this time Catholic, in a temporary (and, as far as is known, long isolated) breach of his self-imposed silence *in ecclesia*, the reasons of which he explained then for the first time.[189] Illich's words summarised twenty years' worth of collective, religious and cultural history, rather than his own intellectual or spiritual biography. The change he had foreseen, prepared, and "celebrated" had actually taken place, and had done so in a rapid and disruptive fashion; the forty-five-year-old Illich let his eyes gaze both on the present and the past, aware of the rift that had occurred between them, and of the contemporary difficulties involved in 'pass[ing] on Christianity' to the younger generations. That text was in fact pervaded by a concern, indeed almost a feeling of *pietas*, for tradition which had not been as explicitly present in his writings from the decade spent in Cuernavaca, at least insofar as it is possible to judge from the little that is known about that experience; that too was perhaps a symptom of the "crisis" mentioned above. In-

188 Unless otherwise specified, the excerpts quoted in this paragraph were taken from *Lima discourse* as edited by Borremans & Samuel (2018), pp. 146-156; see Part V below.

189 *How Will We Pass on Christianity?*, op. cit. (ibid.).

deed, no real "change" was possible if there was no experience of the transition, namely, a memory of the past, full awareness of the options available, and the ability to take a decision about them. Neither could the present have any meaning and dignity if it was only a function of a planned future, to which one entrusted the task of preserving a faith that could in fact only be transmitted in the present, 'at the edge of time'; indeed, it was only if believers became aware of living 'at the end moment of time', that the future could still be a surprise and a gift. It was necessary to redress a vital balance, which modernity had upset and made meaningless, between events and institutions, permanence and innovation, potential and implementation; a possible model in this sense could be offered by the experience of the liturgy, which now had to be reinvented, or possibly even by a universal prayer map that still had to be devised.

It was in the context of his reconsideration of both meanings of the word tradition that Illich interrogated himself on how it was possible to give a testimony of faith in the modern age, 'at the end moment of time'. Rather surprisingly, Illich proceeded to denounce the 'apparent divorce between social criticism and the Christian message' that had taken place: a dual, mutual jeopardy that in his view compromised the faith's visibility on the one hand, thereby preventing all communication, and limited the impact of all social intervention on the other, thus defusing or even redirecting the charge of its criticism. *The Powerless Church* had, in a way, expressed the hope that such a "divorce" would actually take place; *A Call for Celebration* mended the rift by transferring it to an altogether different domain, *in actu exercito*, as it were, with no further need for explanations. It may nonetheless be pointed out that *A Call for Celebration* had actually been preceded by a wide-reaching debate on universal basic income, whereas the political climate at the end of 1971 was the one that occa-

sioned the *Meadows Report on Limits to Growth*; moreover, that "manifesto" was developed in the context of the theology of secularisation, whereas in 1971 Illich was seemingly inclined to a theology of 'liberation of the world from its idols of progress'. In the murkiness of that scenario Illich was still able to predict unprecedented convergences, for instance between the "time of the end" typical of Christian worship and the 'the mood of the end of time' which was now rampant throughout contemporary society: a convergence for which only the Church possessed the necessary tools to evangelise (in the sense of 'disclosing its meaning', as explained above). As for the two parties involved in the divorce which he had denounced, Illich proposed to *radicalise* both of them: that solution would eventually drive them to a mutual encroachment on their spheres of influence, which would be largely determined by their respective degree of *intensity*. As far as the Christian message was concerned, all it had to do was to go back to its authentic core, the Sermon on the Mount; social criticism, for its part, was to do nothing short of reaching a consensus on the upper limit, both qualitative and quantitative, of technological development and goods consumption.[190] All of the trajectories involved in his solution were independent of one another, and in a way even oriented in opposite directions (towards the future on the one hand, and towards the point of origin on the other, *via* rational calculation and prophetic paradoxes); once they had reached the farthest end of their respective domains, nonetheless, they also had the potential, *per connaturalitatem quandam*, to interact in order to achieve the biggest surprise of all: 'Because for the first time in history, […] one will be able to give scientific proof that "blessed are the poor" who voluntary set community limits

190 The first extensive formulation of this principle was in *La necessità di un limite massimo condiviso*; see Part VI.

to what shall be enough, and therefore good enough for our society'. 'Blessed are the poor, because theirs is the earth,'[191] as Illich concluded.

Regardless of whether this project managed to gain 'scientific proof' or not, that was Illich's Gospel. While spiritual poverty was the prerequisite and the essence of missionary exile, and existential poverty was the necessary precondition for both change and its celebration, the "political" poverty derived from self-imposed restraints was the starting point of an unprecedented journey: the one leading to the unwritten future of a liberated mankind.

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I could have never brought the present volume to completion without availing myself of the extensive collection of CIDOC texts preserved in the *Giuseppe Dossetti Library* in Bologna. My thanks also go to its staff, to the Foundation for Religious Sciences John XXIII on whose premises it is located, and to its director Alberto Melloni.
Among the many friends who have encouraged my work in all these years I would like to especially thank Donato Barbone, Italy's historical editor of Illich's writings, who closely followed the gestation of the present volume with paternal patience and youthful enthusiasm.

191 These excerpts are from *How Will We Pass on Christianity?*, op. cit.

I dedicate this effort of mine to the dear memory of my friends Michele Ranchetti and Paolo Prodi, who first introduced me to Ivan Illich, and who supported my research on his life and work.

Thematic Articles

Responses to *Ivan Illich: An Intellectual Journey*

Apocalypse Now!
A Revaluation of the Thought of Ivan Illich

by Brother John, Taizé†

In his masterful and comprehensive study recently published by Penn State University Press, *Ivan Illich: An Intellectual Journey*,[1] David Cayley brings to life, and restores to his proper place as one of the seminal thinkers of our time, a quixotic and unclassifiable scholar whose true worth has arguably never been recognized. A globetrotter whose pilgrimage took him from Vienna to Dalmatia to Florence to Rome to Puerto Rico to Mexico and to the world, a Catholic priest who renounced his ministry so as not to be a sign of division, a short-lived darling of the New Left in the 1960s later tagged by some as a reactionary and a misogynist, a gadfly revered by some and dismissed by others, Illich spent the last decades of his life outside of the public realm, all the while continuing his personal quest to understand the times in which he lived against the background of the history of Western civilization.

It must be admitted that the reasons for this eclipse lay in part with Illich himself, in the "moving viewpoint" which characterized his work, and in his concomitant unwillingness to commit to paper, or even to audiotape or film, notions which taken out of context could easily seem caricatures. His own penchant lay at the opposite extreme from a spirit of system. Every article or book he wrote, each phase of his life, seemed to open up brand-new avenues. He

1 David Cayley, *Ivan Illich: An Intellectual Journey* (University Park PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2021), references henceforth given in the body of the text as C followed by the page numbers.

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Brother John. Apocalypse Now! A Revaluation of the Thought of Ivan Illich. Conspiratio, Spring 2022, p.120-139.

threw off intuitions like a flint giving off sparks each time it was struck; he himself probably was not completely aware of the unity of his thought, since it lay far below consciousness. And yet unity indeed there was: Cayley's outstanding gift to us, in what was obviously a labor of love, is to make that unity patent, and in so doing to allow us to continue in some sense Illich's endeavor, to reveal the roots of modernity and so to help us go beyond the impasses to which it has brought us, in spite of all its obvious benefits and its glittering promises.

In the following pages, I would like to attempt to follow up one aspect of Illich's thought, clearly a central one, as Cayley makes perfectly clear, but at the same time one most liable to misconceptions. That aspect can be summarized in the word "apocalypse." For those without a biblical or theological background, which means over 99% of our contemporaries, the word is either incomprehensible, or else calls to mind cataclysmic images of devastation classified under the rubric "the end of the world." It is not for nothing that the title of this article was taken from a 1979 film dealing with the horrors of the Vietnam War. And of course the closing book of the Bible, the Book of Revelation, whose Greek title is *The Apocalypse of Saint John*, has often become the preferred text of marginal sects preaching death and destruction to those who do not convert to their outlook.

Illich himself was wary of the word apocalypse, according to Cayley, and justifiably so, only using it reluctantly at the end of his life. And yet I will attempt to show in these pages that, correctly understood, it recapitulates well the results of his lifelong reflections, notably in what concerns the evolution of Western—now globalized—society, under the influence of Christianity. It sheds a harsh but ultimately salutary light on our current predicament, and perhaps can indicate a modest way forward, first and foremost for those of us who still take seriously the message of the Messiah Jesus.

Radical and Prophet

Before we enter into the heart of the matter, it is necessary to clear the ground by dealing with a common criticism of Illich's thought. As Cayley shows at length in his book, Illich's multifaceted approach tended to puzzle even well-meaning critics (e.g. C434-41). "Those who...analyzed his work as a series of unsatisfactory 'solutions' to various contemporary 'problems' were often confused and dismayed once the masking effect of his exotic style and appearance wore off" (C439). A typical remark at the end of a presentation of his thought, after outlining all its positive aspects, is "all well and good, but he goes too far." Taken for a progressive social reformer on the one hand or a utopian mystic on the other, he could not fail to disappoint. In fact, Illich was a radical in the truest sense of the term. Usually employed today to define an extremist concerned with overthrowing the status quo, the word literally means "someone who goes to the roots." Illich was less interested in criticizing current aberrations or suggesting stopgap solutions than in penetrating beneath the surface of social institutions to lay bare the assumptions that allowed them to function, which were generally very different from what those involved in them imagined. Does compulsory schooling really exist to create a population of knowledgeable and astute citizens? Does the medical industry serve to foster healthy men and women, so that it gradually becomes less needed? By going beneath the often unconscious myths that undergird social life and bringing their genealogy to light, Illich hoped to lead people to a new freedom of mind that would allow them to undertake the arduous work of rebuilding a society where a truly human life would become possible.

It should be emphasized that a radical outlook, as I have interpreted it, does not at all imply a rejection of tradition. On the contrary, it requires us to go back to those

traditions which have made us who we are to understand just how they have formed us. In an "age of information" when, for most people, the past no longer has any relevance—and even scarcely exists—this kind of traditionalism is radical in every sense of the term.

For Illich, the roots of many of our contemporary institutions and practices can be found in Christianity, notably in the transformation of the Church in the Middle Ages. He disagreed fundamentally with the common conception that explains modernity as essentially a question of people turning their back on their Christian roots in order to adopt a different worldview. While it is true that faith in the biblical God no longer motivates social priorities, the structures of our world to a great degree continue to mirror their Christian antecedents, but without God and Christ. To take one example, Illich considered the Church from the eleventh century on as "the modern state in embryo" (C380) and even "a prototype of the modern corporation" (C231). Illich was able to see what others missed because of his religious background and training: indeed, Cayley shows convincingly that Illich's motivations and outlook from beginning to end were primarily spiritual and theological. If he refused to be considered a theologian for most of his career (C430-34), and preferred to assume the stance of the historian, that is because he did not want to speak from within Church institutions and from a position of authority, or address his insights to believers only. His permanent interest lay nonetheless in "doing theology in a new way" (C431) or even better, in preparing the ground for "the Church of the future" (C433-34) by "clearing away whatever impedes our openness to one another" and to God (C122).

In this sense, I would argue, Illich was an authentic *prophet*. This was an epithet he refused even more decisively than that of theologian, for he argued that, after Christ's com-

ing, the time of prophecy was over, to be replaced by friendship (C389, 424-25). Nonetheless, there is a clear affinity between Illich's life and that of a man like Amos, the earliest prophet in the Hebrew Scriptures to have left a book behind him, some eight centuries before the Common Era. Amos was not a seer by training, but a herdsman and cultivator. He was taken by the Lord "from behind his flocks" and sent to the royal sanctuary of Bethel in the northern kingdom, at the other end of the country, to speak in God's name (Amos 7:14–15). With his eyes enlightened by God, Amos saw, behind its facade of apparent peace and prosperity, a society which was seriously ill. Having forgotten the source of its life, the relationship with a liberating God, that society was being undermined by the selfish quest for individual well-being and the consequent growing gap between rich and poor. The prophet relentlessly exposed the symptoms of this sickness and depicted the consequences that would not fail to follow. Amos was, in short, a true radical; his divinely inspired vision enabled him to see beyond reassuring appearances to the roots of nation's malaise, which would eventually rise to the surface and lead to disaster.

We do not need to invoke divine inspiration to explain Illich, but we find in him the same ability to go beneath the surface and discover unsuspected motivations that would lead one day to unforeseen and pernicious consequences, even in the relatively short term. Such individuals naturally seem extreme, and even unbalanced, to those who are at home within the status quo, however inhuman it may be. "[Illich] predicted in *Tools for Conviviality* that, should technology not be restrained and the 'balances' proper to nature and society restored, the consequence would be an increasingly 'uninhabitable' social and natural environment in which personal initiative would shrink, polarization would grow, 'all bridges to a normative past' would be broken, and 'the

world [would be] transform[ed]... into a treatment ward in which people are constantly taught, socialized, normalized, tested and reformed'" (C21). In 1973 this would have seemed to most people an outlandish exaggeration, whereas today it reads simply like a description of the world we know.

A Theological Outlook

To understand Illich correctly, and so to learn from his diagnosis of our current situation, we therefore need to see it as born of a radical and prophetic outlook inspired by the Christian faith. This emphatically does not mean that his thinking is of interest only to committed believers; on the contrary, after an early period when he was active as a priest and addressed his writings to those within the Church, he more or less consciously turned to a wider audience. His work can be seen at most as "a preparation for faith or the creation of a clearing for faith" (C433) but, in a wider sense, it was an attempt to reexamine the roots of the present in the past "as a seedbed of so far unimagined possibilities" (C292), in order to find our way out of a dead-end. But if one does not need to espouse faith—which in any case is a gift that cannot be imposed—to understand Illich, one does need to take seriously the theological categories which undergirded his thinking.

In his examination of schooling, medicine and other social institutions, Illich gradually perceived a more general law: institutions originally developed for beneficial ends tend to grow larger and larger and, in the end, become counter-productive, "becoming so big, so presumptuous, and so total that they...begin to get in their own way and defeat their originally more limited purposes" (C2). He saw the roots of this in a refusal of limits and balance, a *hybris* which was a direct if unintended result of Christianity. The life and message of Jesus gave humanity a new freedom, "a space in which fi-

delity is freely chosen rather than coerced" (C378). The leaven of the Gospel gradually penetrated the dough of society and weakened traditional constraints based on fear, replacing them with the divine Spirit of mutual love. But when that Spirit that animated this life of freedom was rejected, forgotten or ignored, when "divine anarchy" was normalized, the best turned into the worst. "An unexampled freedom breaks the protective cultural shell that had kept even the most expansive ancient civilizations within certain bounds, and a civilization is erected whose appetite for improvement and expansion can find no limit" (C380).

We are currently living at an advanced stage of this process, with "every institution stretched past its proper limits and every person living beyond their capacity." So "what better time to ask how the unlimited got loose in our world and how things might be put back within distinct bounds?" (C455). And even more urgently: what attitudes and practices can help us to live authentically and joyfully in a world run amok?

The Thinker as Apocalyptician

I have referred to Illich as a radical and a prophet, but I think his work is best understood—and this is in fact the main thesis of this article—as the author of an apocalypse. This is the notion, to my mind, that brings together all the different aspects of his thought. So it is now time to turn to a deeper understanding of apocalypse, as a way of recapitulating Illich's insights, on the one hand, and of explaining our current straits on the other.

A first and essential step in this endeavor is to leave behind the current connotations of the word, and even the more traditional notions, extrapolated from certain biblical images taken out of context or taken literally. Here I part company to a certain extent from Cayley, who sees already in

the New Testament writings an ambivalence between what he refers to as "the historical and the mythological apocalypse.... The New Testament is pervaded by this mythological apocalypticism and Jesus's often expressed preference for sinners and lost sheep counterbalanced by the prediction that those who fail to heed him will be thrown into 'the outer darkness [where] men weep and gnash their teeth'" (C405). I grant the presence of such "mythological" images and language in the New Testament, although I would prefer the term "symbolic," but I disagree with the notion that this implies any ambivalence or split consciousness in the New Testament authors. In Paul's letters, for instance, the view of Jesus as our Passover sacrifice and the call to imitate his way of life are not mutually exclusive, but two sides of the same coin. Paul takes images current in his day and reinterprets them to illustrate the work of Christ. In those days, a sacrifice was a ritual offering, a gift made to a divinity. Jesus's entire existence was one of self-giving; he gave himself to God by living for others. And that is the behavior he encourages the followers of Jesus to practice.

In the same way, the Book of Revelation employs a host of images available in the imagination of that time and place, taken in fact predominantly from the Hebrew Scriptures, and transforms them to express aspects of the life and teachings of Jesus, doing the same things the four gospels do, but in a very different style. Admittedly this makes interpretation difficult, since it can often appear to us as a kind of coded language for which we lack the key. Most people cannot readily grasp, for example, that "the great day of the wrath of the Lamb" (Rev 6:16-17) is in fact Good Friday (have you ever seen an angry lamb?), and that "washing one's robes and making them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Rev 7:14) refers to the transformation and divinization of the believer's life, begun in baptism and made possible through Jesus's self-giving. The cryptic and at times gruesome character of

this book is undoubtedly why it could be used to justify all kinds of aberrant philosophies and what Cayley calls a mythological view of the Christian life.

Let us begin, then, by rejecting the notion that Christian apocalyptic writing is a literal description, more or less veiled, of the end of the world. Let us go further and assert that the dramatic, violent and often bizarre images in which it is clothed do not express its essence. This is what Cayley refers to as "mythological apocalypse," absent in Illich. My thesis, however, is that this dimension is merely the outer garb and not the living body of the Biblical apocalypse. As a twentieth-century thinker, Illich has clothed his apocalypse in quite different attire, but the underlying reality remains the same. He has, to use Cayley's terminology, written a historical apocalypse, one based on a careful reading of history in the light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Ivan and John

So just what is an apocalypse, then? To focus my efforts, I will confine myself to the final book of the New Testament. Called in English the Book of Revelation and based on visions by a certain John on the isle of Patmos, it is in fact the only full-fledged apocalypse we have that is considered canonical. What is its purpose? The first words of an ancient text, the equivalent of our title, provide important information: *Apokalypsis Iēsou Christou*, the unveiling or revelation of Jesus Christ. We are immediately confronted with an enigma, one of the first of many in this book. Is this an objective genitive, in other words is Jesus the one who is revealed, or rather a subjective genitive, referring to Jesus who reveals something? Both meanings are possible, and in the present case it seems best to keep them together, in conformity with the overall style of the work.

The Book of Revelation thus intends to show us, first

of all, who Jesus is. It does this, however, not by telling stories of his life, as in the four gospels, but by applying images from the Hebrew Scriptures to Jesus. Jesus is, for example, "the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth" (Rev 1:5). Illich, for his part, uses modern categories to help people understand the founder of Christianity, such as "anarchist savior," "the Powerless One," "a dropout from power and money," "a conscientious objector to force" (C401), "a major disturber and fool" (C359). But, like the Book of Revelation, Illich spends relatively little time on this aspect of things. Like the Book of Revelation again, he is more concerned with the *effects* of Jesus's coming on human history. Jesus reveals the deepest significance of human life, and human life is eminently historical, in other words an ongoing life in time.

When, as Christians believe, after centuries of preparation the divine fully entered human history in the Man from Nazareth, things could never be the same again. To return to one of Jesus's own key images (Matt 13:33), the leaven has now been put into the dough and an irreversible process of transformation has begun. Slowly but surely, a world comes to an end. When John of Patmos describes the end of this world, he does so using biblical images of cosmic convulsions. For example:

> There was a great earthquake, and the sun became like a sack of goat hair, and the whole moon turned blood-red, and the stars in the sky fell to earth, as a fig-tree drops its fruit when shaken by a strong wind. (Rev 6:12-13)

This occurs on "the great day of the wrath of the Lamb," which we have already seen is an a coded description of Christ's death on the cross (cf. Matt 27:51ff), the true beginning of the end of the old world. The notion of God's "wrath" or "anger" is a shortcut to denote the divine response to evil: Jesus,

however, responds to evil by taking it upon himself and by loving in return, thus putting an end to the spiral of violence once and for all. We could thus say that the gift he makes of his life is violence done to violence, "the destruction of those who are destroying the earth" (Rev 11:18).

In short, what is described in the Book of Revelation is not "the end of *the* world" but "the end of *a* world," the implosion of a society that clings to its privileges and refuses to open itself to the Newness of God. From a different perspective and using a wholly different language, is not Illich attempting to indicate the same thing? Saint John had his visions at a time when Christians were a tiny besieged minority at the heart of the powerful Roman Empire. That empire realized, instinctively, that this new teaching was anathema to it, and tried—unsuccessfully as it turned out—to stamp it out. Illich, benefiting from two thousand years of distance from the key Event, was able more clearly to analyze the process by which the seeming acceptance of the Christian message contained in fact the seeds of its rejection. The gift of freedom in the Spirit offered by Christ made a choice necessary and possible. Illich explores at length how this opened the door to a kind of evil which was previously unknown, the corruption or perversion of the best which is the worst. Attempting to transform the gift into a norm, "a gratuitous and free choice [into] an ideology and an idealism" (C358), Christendom set the stage for the greatest of all betrayals—the use of the freedom and power bequeathed by Christ for human aggrandizement. It made a new kind of society possible, one restrained by nothing but its own thirsts in achieving its self-centered ends, a world without balance and without limits, but also without surprises. To quote Cayley once again: we are "watching the current emergence of what Israeli historian Yuval Noah Harari calls *Homo Deus*—a humanity now remaking creation after its own image, as God once made us.

Is it imaginable that Man could have become God, as Harari's title says, without God first condescending to become Man?" (C 363).

If we look beyond Illich's analysis and critique of particular social institutions and the ideologies that motivate them and make them impervious to change, we find the same view of history as in the Book of Revelation. In this specific sense, quite different from the popular understanding of the term, Illich's work is an apocalypse. Biblical revelation, culminating in the Christian Gospel, disactivated the safeguards that pre-Christian civilizations had unconsciously erected to protect themselves from the uncontrollable energy of the sacred, and replaced it with the freedom to love. But this freedom involved a choice; it could be used to love, but also to overthrow all norms and attempt to recreate humanity in its own image. Fearlessness became recklessness (C260). To express it schematically in visible terms (see C257-60): ancient civilizations tried to control the sacred by, among other things, capturing it in images ("idols"). In Israel these images were forbidden; God took the initiative to communicate by his Word, not at the disposal of human beings. In Jesus the Word became flesh, and so a new kind of image became possible—the icon. All icons, theologically speaking, are a development of the face of Christ and a window on to eternity. But where faith in the Risen Lord disappeared, an empty space opened up that anything could fill. Today, we live in a world of "manufactured appearances" and "pseudo-events" (C260), increasingly at the mercy of electronic media that spirit us off into a virtual un-reality.

Apocalyptic Time

A major confusion in interpretations of the Book of Revelation across the centuries, which arguably lies at the root of the popular misconceptions, is the notion that the

book is exclusively concerned with the future, the putative "end of the world." Most often this end-time is felt to be imminent, and after two thousand years there are still people claiming that it is on the verge of erupting, despite the fact that every previous claim of this sort was ultimately found to be spurious. John based his vision of Babylon on the Roman Empire of his time, but that empire did not disappear in the twinkling of an eye, to be replaced by God's Kingdom come in glory. So it is important to investigate more closely the notion of apocalyptic time.

First of all, time admittedly does play an important role in the visions of John of Patmos. Something literally earth-shattering is in process, namely the destruction of the old world and the coming of the new. The progress is not fully linear, however; there are twists and turns and the same realities are seen, so to speak, from different angles. A principal way of expressing this progression is by the use of sevens: seven seals opened one after the other, seven trumpets ringing out, seven bowls pouring their contents on the earth. And there is a clear note of urgency that runs through the entire work: "what must soon take place" (Rev 1:1; 22:6), "the time is at hand" (Rev 1:3), "I am coming soon" (Rev 22:12,20).

Some people have drawn the conclusion from all this that apocalyptic thought is based on a colossal misunderstanding, not to say a delusion. They maintain that the early Christians thought the return of Christ in glory was imminent, and were proven wrong. The Book of Revelation, consequently, is interesting merely as a quaint relic of a road not taken. If we do not accept this solution, however, is there another way to understand the work? Indeed there is, and it consists in the realization that while apocalyptic time is related to our human historical chronology, there is no one-to-one correspondence between the two. Apocalyptic time takes as its starting-point the entry of God into human history, and

depicts the way the consequences of this work themselves out over time. It is not concerned primarily with the final stage of this process, but with the process itself. At the heart of this process is the Event of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, which is both a culmination—God has given everything in giving his Son—and a new beginning, because this Presence exercises a transformative effect upon the universe. The final act of this process lies outside the realm of human calculation: "No one knows the day nor the hour" (Matt 24:36; cf. Rev. 3:3). The note of urgency in the apocalyptic writings refers not to a date on our calendars, but to the importance of the choice to be made for or against Christ in the present moment. There is no time to waste: when we understand what God is doing, we realize that this must be the absolute priority, calling for nothing less than a commitment of our entire being.

Apocalyptic time, then, is not a matter of abstruse calculations to determine when human history will come to an end. It is rather a vision of our human history informed by the entry of the divine, so that we can see our world with different eyes and act in consequence. This should help us to resolve the dichotomy which Cayley sees when he distinguishes an "apocalyptic" and a "non-apocalyptic" dimension in the thought of Illich. In his sociological and historical studies, Illich explored the effects of the Gospel for Western, now globalized society. He emphasized one particular consequence: the appearance of a new kind of evil that consisted in turning one's back on Christ and perverting the freedom bequeathed by him (C359-63). Following Saint Paul, he spoke of "the mystery of evil," recapitulated in the symbol of the anti-Christ. Writing a generation ago, he felt that the contemporary world had already gone very far in this direction, although the current situation had been prepared for many centuries. One can only imagine what he would have said

had he been alive today, in a world where the specter of a putative new virus has led to widespread panic and concomitant blind obedience to so-called experts and authorities in the name of a deified Science, and where shifts in the balance of power between great nations risks overturning the post-1989 status quo.

To qualify our time, based on Illich's analysis, as apocalyptic, may be a handy shortcut, but it is essentially inexact. It is more correct to say that "history 'on the far side of the cross' is inevitably apocalyptic—it tends to the ever-fuller revelation of this 'mystery of evil' that the Incarnation, once mistaken, sets in motion" (C387). If today this revelation or unveiling is becoming more flagrant, then in that sense one might say that we live in an apocalyptic age. But in reality, to say it once again, it is the entire process that is an apocalypse, not its final stages.

Come Out of Her, My People!

That is why there is no contradiction between an apocalyptic interpretation of history, rightly understood, and the importance of living out the Gospel in the simple events of everyday life, what Cayley refers to as Illich's non-apocalyptic side. It should be emphasized that the Book of Revelation illuminates the dynamics of history in the light of Christ's coming not to sow fear and panic, a common misconception—it is not addressed to enemies of the Gospel—but rather to give hope to beleaguered believers in Christ, impressed and disoriented by the power of Rome, and to convince them that this is not the last word: in spite of everything, the God of Jesus is the one in charge of history. Against the traditional view that the work was written at a time of widespread persecution, scholars today recognize that the cultural atmosphere of John's Apocalypse was closer to that of our time. In the face of an imposing and well-organized civilization, with its trea-

sures of art and architecture, magnificent temples with lavish ceremonies, a matchless legal and political organization, all this protected by a huge and mighty army, proud of its victories, small groups of Christians could be tempted to doubt the well-foundedness of their faith. Was the vision expressed in the Gospel realistic, or simply a wild dream? Perhaps, after all, it was a mistake to leave a "normal life" behind to follow that itinerant preacher, put to death by Roman justice in a faraway corner of the Empire.

The Book of Revelation explicitly intends to counteract this temptation. It makes use of visionary language to describe an alternate reality, that of faith. These visions show that, in spite of misleading appearances, the God revealed by the Messiah Jesus is truly the Sovereign Lord of the universe and of human history. John refers to the wider society as "Babylon," and describes it as a majestic palace built on sand, destined to collapse in the tempests of history "in a single day" (Rev 18:8) or even "in one hour" (Rev 18:10,17,19). To an infatuation with illusory appearances, the seer opposes "the perseverance and faith of the saints" (Rev 13:10). Their patient endurance will ultimately win out (Rev 14:12); those who are faithful to the end will receive the crown of life (Rev 2:10).

How should believers express their faithfulness to Christ in the midst of a hostile or indifferent society? In John's Apocalypse, a voice from heaven provides the answer in no uncertain terms: "Come out, my people, away from her, so that you may have no complicity in her sins and will not share in the calamities that befall her!" (Rev 18:4). These words resemble those found in prophetic parallels to this text (cf. Jer 50:8; 51:6,45; Isa 48:20; 52:11), but their meaning is, as usual, quite different. John is not advising the Christian community of Rome, or Jerusalem, to emigrate to another location, nor is he telling city-dwellers to flee into the coun-

tryside. Since he sees Babylon everywhere, he is in fact proposing what we could call an "inward migration." Believers are being asked to remember that their primary allegiance is to another commonwealth, to the Reign of God, and consequently to detach themselves from the values of a world doomed to destruction. If they cling to what the surrounding society offers, their minds and hearts will become entrapped, and they will go down in the orgy of self-destruction that will ultimately engulf that world. The call to leave Babylon is an insistent reminder to the followers of Christ first and foremost to seek God's Kingdom and its justice (cf. Matt 6:33), in other words to acknowledge the one true God as the Source of their life and to cultivate the kinds of alternative human relationships that follow from this recognition. This implies of necessity maintaining a critical distance with respect to the claims of the society and culture in which they find themselves. The role of believers is to be "an other-worldly community that lives in the world" (C403).

I would argue that here we have a clear parallel with Illich's own way of encouraging people to live out their convictions. Those who see through the illusory veils of an ever more inhuman society should begin at once, in the present moment (C406-07), to witness to an alternative reality, celebrating spaces of what he called conviviality, a "realm of spontaneity and gift, friendship and mutual aid, the unplanned and the ungoverned" (C452; cf. 393). He called for a foolish faith, open to surprises (C359): "our hope of salvation lies in our being surprised by the Other" (C267-71). Illich saw this as already laying the foundations of a "'post-religious' Church" (C461) based on friendship (C417-23), involving new forms of askesis or renunciation (C260-62, 302-3, 422), not taking the shape of a multinational corporation but incarnate in small groups of women and men rooted in prayer and silence, gathering periodically around a table for cele-

bration and for "common investigation" (C422). Cayley uses two pregnant images to point to a renewed Christianity: "an incipient neo-monastic culture that will conserve tradition through the new age [of plasticity]" (C25), and a group of clowns performing on the stage of history where a tragedy is unfolding (C416). Like the Book of Revelation, Illich spent most of his time analyzing the consequences of unfaithfulness to the Gospel and not in describing an alternative, since he felt that this could only spring up spontaneously in the present moment (C90-93). But, again like John's Apocalypse, his basic attitude was one of hope, rooted not in human perfectibility but in the resurrection of Christ, constantly accessible to us in God's today.

Apocalypse Now!

To conclude these reflections, I would like to return to the title of this article, which hopefully can now be understood as a play on words that leads us to the heart of the life and work of Ivan Illich.

In the first place, my contention here has been that all the books, articles, talks and conversations of that often disconcerting thinker can be summed up in one word. They constitute an apocalypse for our time. This does not mean, as I hope the previous pages have made clear, a prophecy of doom, still less a call for violent change, but rather an exposition of the consequences of the entry of God into human history, a history that tends not only to forget God, but to use the gift of divine freedom to shore up its own apostasy. Apocalyptic wrath is, in the final analysis, a veil covering a deep sorrow at the refusal of human beings to seek their own true good, their true happiness. Illich was familiar with this attitude, using the traditional term "contrition" for it in his exposition of the parable of the Good Samaritan (C357). As we have seen, Illich was reluctant to use the word "apocalypse" to characterize his analysis, un-

doubtedly because of its perversion in the course of the ages. He certainly did not wish to be seen merely as a nay-sayer, and in this he bore a certain resemblance to a prophet like Jeremiah, a gentle man forced to proclaim God's judgment of his rebellious people: "Whenever I speak, I cry out proclaiming violence and destruction. So the word of the Lord has brought me insult and reproach all day long. [...] Cursed be the day I was born! [...] Why did I ever come out of the womb to see trouble and sorrow and to end my days in shame?" (Jer 20:8,14,18). But like Jeremiah, Illich could not remain silent in the face of the threat to humanity of a "worldwide society in which all proportions lie in ruins, replaced by Lego-like 'values' that can be reconfigured at will" (C384). He was led to decry modernity as an "inverted faith" (C385) where a new form of evil had run rampant, opening the possibility of "a hellish society beyond any terrors known to antiquity" (C 384).

At the same time, Illich's life and thought are in a direct line from the New Testament writings, including its final book, insofar as they are ultimately an act of faith and hope made possible by the same Incarnation that has opened the way to such deep perversion. They call us to return to the past "as a seedbed of so far unimagined possibilities" (C292), so that we can be open, here and now, to the inbreaking of the Kingdom, which always comes as a surprise, which we can celebrate but never possess, and which finds its clearest expression in an inclusive friendship.

If the reflections in these pages are accurate, then, Ivan Illich reveals himself not only as a brilliant thinker who sheds light on the contradictions of modernity and calls for a more human world, but as a believer in the God of Jesus Christ who is a fitting successor of the early disciples. He returns to the Christian origins to reveal their true import and discovers in them new ground-breaking perspectives to orient us in the present-day. David Cayley deserves our heartfelt thanks for calling this to our attention.

† Born in Philadelphia, Brother John entered the Taizé Community, an ecumenical monastic community in France, in 1974. In the 1980s he was part of a small community of brothers living in a poor neighborhood of Manhattan. He is now based in Taizé France where, among other occupations, he helps the young and not-so-young visitors to enter into the world of the Bible. He spends part of his time in the United States and Italy to lead meetings and prayers, especially with young adults. He has written a number of books, translated into ten languages, on Biblical topics, the most recent being *Metanoia: The Grammar of the Christian Life* (Eugene OR: Wipf & Stock, 2021).

Not a clergyman, just a man

by Neto Leão

Preamble

I remember the day I opened my apartment's door and found David Cayley's latest book on Illich sitting on my doorstep – *Ivan Illich: An Intellectual Journey* (2021). It was a gift from my friend and teacher Sajay Samuel. On the first page, I read the marks of a simple and objective dedication: "To my dear friend Neto, for reading! Cheers, Sajay!" I believe that says it all. It is a book to be read, unlike many among those infamous lists of most read. I opened the package and began reading it right away.

At that time, around March 2021, I was writing, from an Illichian perspective, the first chapter of my doctoral thesis on political ecology. This book opened a path for clarifying much of my own investigations on Illich's first writings, those which are openly theological. David Cayley writes with clarity and depth. *Ivan Illich: an Intellectual Journey* is one of the finest seeds sprouting out of the garden of Illich's life and thought. Nourished by Cayley's own questions and propositions, it is perhaps the most thorough analysis stitched to the theological line of force that characterizes the written word in Illich.

One of Cayley's discoveries in writing this book, as he says, was Illich's standpoint as "a philosopher of complementarity." Being-in-the-world, according to Cayley, means the awareness of its duality. In Illich, "this philosophy begins with a clear understanding that 'the kingdom of God' or 'the kingdom of heaven' that Jesus preached was to be found in

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the world but that it was not '*of* the world' (Cayley, 2021)."

I have argued for something similar in my last article for *Conspiratio,* titled *How to read Ivan Illich*. After analyzing Illich's short essay *Puerto Ricans in New York: Not Foreigners, Yet Foreign* (1959) and his response to Cayley that, for him, home was Puerto Rico (Cayley, 1992), I suggested that Illich maintained a distance to the world to which he is nevertheless attached. He acknowledged feeling a kinship to Puerto Rico ("...in Puerto Rico, *we*…") but did not dissolve the distance between him and Puerto Ricans ("I could not say 'we Puerto Ricans'"). "The theological depth of his personal response to a call can be gauged by the fidelity of his stance to be in the world and not of it (Leão, 2021)."

The purpose of this short article is to corroborate and deepen Cayley's discovery of Illich as a 'philosopher of complementarity.' I suggest that Illich's *Vanishing Clergyman* (1959/1967) is a pivotal essay in which to discover a germ of what will later appear as 'complementarity' in *Gender*. Specifically, as Cayley recognizes (p.63-64), Illich extends a traditional Catholic distinction between Church understood as a *She* and the church understood as an *it*. Even if this distinction is only implicit in the *Vanishing Clergyman*, the essay does not make sense without it. I suggest that Illich's argument for declericalizing the church does not only depend on the authority of tradition (Tyconius) but more significantly on the experience of truth among the faithful during his pilgrimage through Latin America. I believe that this essay also prefigures the journey of Illich vanishing as clergyman to become just a man.

The soil and the seed

In one of his conversations with David Cayley, Illich said that the experience in Latin America brought back to him the trust in his intuition as a way of thinking, that is,

in flesh as a constitutive part of deliberation and reflection. I sniff something of foundational significance to his work and life when Illich says he recouped his faith in intuition during these years. Trusting one senses forms one of the pillars for a convivial society, especially when one thinks of what Illich calls "finding a natural threshold". Moreover, in his later years, Illich would delve into the historicity of the senses. It is a plausible guess that it was in Latin America, when Illich was first exposed to communities not yet homogenized by industrial modes of production and service institutions, that Illich germinates his interest in the senses as a fundamental historical category. Illich left Puerto Rico in 1960, and since then, as one can see throughout his life, has distanced himself and avoided taking on bureaucratic positions in institutions. In doing so, he avoided the deadening comfort of bureaucratic roles and exposes himself more directly to concrete ways of living.

Young Ivan Illich left Ponce and embarked on a pilgrimage that began in Santiago Chile and extended to Caracas, Venezuela in 1959. Kaller-Dietrich says that the author made his pilgrimage on foot or hitchhiking. Illich told Cayley that it is only by walking on his own feet that the distances, cultural universes, and particularities of each region are experienced. According to Martina Kaller-Dietrich Illich pilgrimage took four months. Although we have very little information about the events of this pilgrimage, it is likely that it would have resembled his later sojourns in Latin America, typically filled by meetings with notable figures in favor of a more organic Church. Such figures included Dom Hélder Câmara and the priests of *Petrópolis*, Francisco Julião and the peasant leagues in the Northeast – a very important activist group that first initiated the struggle for agrarian reformation in Brazil – as well as Paulo Freire and other intellectuals whether they were linked to the church or not.

The main hypothesis here is that Illich's *Vanishing*

Clergyman, although published in 1967 in the *Critic* of Chicago – the first draft is from 1959 – reflects and is shaped by Illich's immersive years in the deep heart of Latin America. Illich's arguments for vanishing as a clergyman to become, once again, just a man, and for belonging to a Church where the dinner table could be the altar, resonate the diverse practices of faith he personally experienced during his sojourn among Puerto Ricans, once in New York and later in Ponce, and his pilgrimage through villages, communities, peoples, and slums across Latin America. Illich said he would not discuss the matter of being a clergyman in "abstract terms". It is reasonable to surmise that Illich's witness of the living Church in Latin America informed his ideas for the "shape of the future ministry".

The incipit of *The Vanishing Clergyman* points at the target to which Illich is aiming his argument: "the Roman church is the world's largest non-governmental bureaucracy" which, at the time, employed about 1,800,000 employees. The red thread animating his argument is this: how can it be that the Roman church, which wants to be the sign of Christ's presence in the world, rely on a bureaucratic structure of faith? Are there possible paths towards a much more communal Church? Illich was obviously not arguing for the complete dismantling of the Roman church structure. He was not encouraging abandoning the stone build church or parish. The point here is less about destroying something and more about embracing a practice that already exists (how the church 'it' could make room for the Church 'She' to flourish. He was attempting to fathom the shape of a church that renounces control over the mystery of Christ within us.

On reading *The Vanishing Clergyman* one sees how thoroughly Illich was considering the possible paths to be taken towards a more communal Church. He describes in detail how such a Church was a possibility even according to the canon law of the time. For instance, he mentions the

sacramental ministry of marriage performed by a layperson is permissible by church law when a priest cannot attend a community within thirty days. Similarly, he imagines the recognition of a layman/woman as unfit for sacramental symbolic unity under the umbrella of the canon law of 'suspension'. Most priests acquire a bureaucratic mentality that keeps them away from the consuming fire that is the love of Christ. The training of priests and dioceses management were increasingly under the influence and teaching of business consultants. The clergy-as-manager desired for more of it even as they needed less. In contrast to such a managerial clerisy, Illich had a life-long waking dream of sowing what he called the "Christian community of tomorrow": of ministry as a work of leisure and not a job for professionals; of a 'lay' adult and not ordained priest to preside at meetings of the faithful; of periodic contact among friends to take the place of Sunday meetings between unknown strangers; of the accountant or plumber who was authorized by the assent of the local community and not papal dispensation to conduct the reading of the Word.

One must also take this essay as a cornerstone for Illich's own life and thinking. A thorough investigation of his intellectual trajectory would lead to the conclusion that the household table is a fundamental place of meeting for ideas to flourish, for the encounter with the other, for hospitality. In the words of Illich, "I foresee the face-to-face meeting of families around the table, rather than the impersonal attendance of a crowd around an altar". Is not this the very condition, the soil from which sprouted all Illich's later books? Did not "celebrations [that] sanctify the dining room" underwrite Illich's arguments against counterproductivity, his recognition of the loss of gender, and his recovery of the hesitant gaze which find in the face of the other the possibility for ethics in the 21st century? To reiterate, I am suggesting that Illich glimpsed the

shape of the Christian community of tomorrow in the conduct of the many Christic communities he witnessed during his pilgrimage between 1951 and 1967 into the depths of faith in Latin America.[1]

I am not saying that the Christian faith was lived in the southern tropics in such a way that anyone would obviously come to Illich's conclusions and ideas. Nor do I mean to say that these communities are paradisical, where joy and freedom are celebrated daily. The brutal legacy of slavery is just one example of some of the enduring social structures of these countries. Nevertheless, I believe that Illich sojourn among the Latin American communities gave content to his imagination of cultivating a way of living that renounced as much of the apparatus – services and 'canned' solutions – as feasible. I suggest that Illich's recognition that "the current ecclesiastical imagination is still inadequate for defining this new synthesis" for the Church to come was sparked by and rooted in his time in Latin America during the late 1950s and early 1960s.

Of course, this texture of a communal Church was not the reality of all communities in Mexico City or São Paulo, for example, where the industrial mode of production was rapidly changing the fabric of society. However, in that epoch most of the countries in Latin America had an open window towards a society that was neither capitalist nor socialist – though we know how much the CIA took care of that openness! I think Illich saw a terrain for something completely different from the bipolar world. In his essay *Planned Poverty: the end result of technical assistance, Celebration of Awareness*, Illich argued as much writing, "we must seek survival in a Third World in which human ingenuity can peacefully outwit ma-

1 One is not saying that these conditions could not be verified elsewhere in the world. However, Illich was living and wandering, at this point of his life, across Latin America, the soil from where his ideas sprout out.

chined might."[2]

Not a clergyman, just a man

I believe Illich might have been confused as a liberation theologian by his contemporaries, not to mention by the Doctrine of the Faith. As Cayley points out, this confusion persists to this day when one considers Hartch's book, *The Prophet of Cuernavaca*. In Hartch's own words: Illich "camouflaged his theology" because he "had a hidden purpose." Illich never wrote about Theology of Liberation in any of his writings while he was a priest. He might have known Gustavo Gutiérrez[3] in Lima, Peru. Gutiérrez's book aims to confront social injustice and centuries of violent domination in Latin America through the light of the Gospel.[4] One of the few, if not unique, appearance of the idea of liberation in Illich, *Lima Discourse* – precisely at the epicenter of Theology of Liberation – point toward something quite different: "liberation can come only from those who choose the desert because they have been set free."

Illich might have cultivated relationships with grassroots ecclesial communities and theologians of liberation. The 'use' of the Gospel for social change is not a hidden purpose in Illich's early writings as a priest. Negative theology is a much different thing than camouflage. One cannot say that his writings are under the methodological frame of histori-

2 Boaventura de Sousa Santos, the Portuguese philosopher – who was also part of CIDOC (*Law Against Law*) – has intensely written, on his own way, about what Illich called "Third World ingenuity" and how the "hope comes from the South". For example, *Toward a New Legal Common Sense* (1995), *Epistemologies of the South: Justice against Epistemicide* (2014) and *The End of Cognitive Empire: the coming of age of epistemologies of the South* (2018). Curiously enough, I cannot find a single reference to Ivan Illich in any of these famous books.

3 See *Teología de la Liberación* (1972), by Gustavo Gutiérrez.

4 For Illich's perspective on the role of the church on social change and development, see the essay *The Powerless Church,* also in *Celebration of Awareness*.

cal materialism either. Illich's own words clarify this issue: "I want to celebrate my faith for no purpose at all."

The timing of this essay is coeval with a Brazilian document of the Bishops and Superiors of the Northeast – of which Dom Hélder Câmara was the general secretary – titled *Eu ouvi os clamores do meu povo* (I heard the cries of my people). This document was part of the effort by some clergy to think the future of the Church. According to Luis Alberto Gomez de Souza, Dom Camara and Illich had even explored the possibility of preparing a Vatican III, to give content to the Church of tomorrow.[5] Roberto Romano brilliantly explains the presuppositions of this document in his *Brasil, Igreja contra Estado: crítica ao populismo católico*[6] (Brazil, Church against State: criticism of Catholic populism, my translation). The document ostensibly defended the thesis that '*Deus está comprometido*' (God is committed). In Portuguese however, differently than in English and depending exclusively on the context, to be committed also means to be compromised.

Roberto Romano will play on the double meaning of the word in Portuguese (God is committed or compromised) in his interpretation of the Brazilian document. Romano discusses four ways that, during the 1960's, one could exemplify God as committed to or compromised by his people. Each of

5 Luis Alberto Gomez de Souza, D. Helder, Irmão dos pobres *(Um testemunho no ano de seu Centenário*), 2009.

6 This book is a pearl among the literature of history and philosophy of the Roman Church in Brazil and its relation to the State. Because it is the doctoral dissertation of Prof. Roberto Romano, one can find the original in French or his own translation to Portuguese: ROMANO, Roberto. *Brasil, Igreja contra Estado: crítica ao populismo católico*. São Paulo: Kairós, 1979. We remind the reader that this book was written during the horrendous Brazilian dictatorship, during which the author, who had been a Dominican priest, was arrested and tortured. The church's choice of populism over communal life can give a historical perspective on the rise and establishment of evangelical churches throughout Brazil and South America due to the void left by the Roman church. The evangelicals are the fraction of society who helped electing Jair Bolsonaro as president (2018).

these efforts to decipher the times entailed reading the gospel conscientiously. The first way would be through the relationship between man and God, intimately established by a divine commitment within history. The second, divine commitment would be subject to a kind of reactive judgment, especially when the official church sacralizes transient economic and social orders. The third would emphasize God being compromised by his people, in the sense that the residual existence of the church would completely disappear in the long run. Finally, the fourth form would be that which recognizes the discredited condition of the church and, therefore "takes as a historical task to shape the de-Christianized culture". Accordingly, the first "proposes development as an ideal policy"; the second as exemplified by the theology of liberation wants to "detach Christian values from positively established orders"; the third dissolves the church into industrial societies as when it is used as a theater or an art museum; the fourth and last, believes in the need to "defend Christian doctrine through modern means of communication" including rock bands and Instagram (Romano, 1979). All these four positions reflect different stances of the church, none of which imagined a vanished clergyman, which Ivan Illich proposed from the standpoint of the Church to which he remained committed without compromise.

Illich conceived the metamorphosis of the altar into the dining table that can receive friends and celebrate life in Christ among others sharing love and joy. In this way, the anonymous crowd around the altar would become personal. Illich knew that this could have been a possible reality in the tropics, not necessarily the whole of Roman Christianity. The grassroots ecclesial communities had already cultivated certain aspects that shaped this ministry of tomorrow of which Illich spoke. One could argue that the ecclesiastical reality of the Christian communities in the first century was similar to

what Illich was seeing in Latin America of the mid-twentieth century[7] and that the Church to come is always already a historical/theological reality. However, to invoke the reality of a communal Christic gathering is not to force upon men a pure and true form of Christianity. Instead, it is to trust that there were and are concrete symbolic and material conditions for such Christic communities to thrive organically. It is not because one intends to propagate right living under an orthodoxy that one points to the existence of the communal Church. Rather, it is to recall and summon the Word back to a place where it can fit in the world again, because the Word is written in hearts of men.

But what would then happen to sacramental ministry and theological education? Was Illich promoting a shallow and compromised teaching, that is, distant from centuries of tradition and trapped in imprecision? Quite the contrary. He reminds the reader that, beyond personal maturity, theological precision, contemplative prayer, and charity, the "specific result of Christian education is the *sensus ecclesiae*". The sense of the Church is the root nourished by the soil of authentic Christian tradition. The fruit germinates in "the imaginative inventiveness of the faith" expressed "in terms of the gifts of the Spirit". These gifts (without reason, no causes) are only possible to stream out of someone who lives a distinct way of living, whose wisdom comes not from the seminar room, but from the "prayerful celebration of liturgy". Illich had spoken before on the question of deschooling the church on two different occasions: *Lima Discourse*, a lecture directed to an au-

7 The book of Acts – the continuation of the Gospel of St. Luke – for instance, which narrates the deeds of the Apostles and the history of the primitive Church after the death and resurrection of Christ, suggests this way of living among first Christians: "And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved".

ditorium of priests in Lima, Peru; and *School: The Sacred Cow*.

He is not underrating the importance of rigorous theological study (he definitely appreciated it – I can only imagine how much he could delight himself with such readings). His position is to "put it in its proper place". That means, for Illich, to use theology as the tool to verify the fidelity of one's experience of savoring the revealed truth (*lectio divina*, for instance), which is ultimately the result of Church's faith. Theology is not necessarily the result of faith, often it is not. In this sense, theology should bow before faith and aid its imaginative enrichment in obedience to the Word. The minister of the Church to come is not one who is trained for "professional competence to teach the public" but one who seeks "prophetic humility to moderate a Christian group."

By inserting faith back into the heart of the church, Illich was opening room for the Spirit to continually re-create the Church. A direct definition of faith is found in the New Testament letter of *Hebrews*: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen". Only the Spirit can unfold and unveil the evidence of things not seen. Illich was creatively celebrating his faith nourished by what he saw during his pilgrimage through Latin America. The question remained if church authorities and his superiors could also see the unseen, could have faith.

As Illich once said, "utopia is neither prophecy nor planning, it is a humorous way of looking at the present, which makes faith transparent". Illich saw evidence for the ministry of tomorrow, in which he did not put himself in the position of a priest who stands in the place of God or of a manager who is seated on a throne of bureaucratic power setting the pace of changes. The theological line of force of his writings meets at the place where Illich himself stands: on contingency. His stance is that of one who walks the tightrope, always aware of the necessary balance, gazing towards what he hopes because

he sees it. If Illich is to be taken as a prophet, I can only fathom it as a gift of seeing with sharp clarity his own present. The gift of the prophet is to see deeply into the today, to discern what is evident in the unseen.

The words are from Stephen, minutes before he was stoned to death, but are coeval with Illich's condition within the church: "Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers…". The posture of the religious – the priestly type of Stephen's time – is very much similar to those during Illich's time – these too covered their ears and yelled at the top of their voices. And like the Great Inquisitor in Dostoevsky's *Brothers Karamazov*, Illich was told to leave the church and never come back for standing up to them.

The Spirit, as Illich said because he lived it, is the manifestation in history of "hope, the foolishness of Christ and sometimes utopia".[8] Illich became a man by vanishing as a clergyman, it was his irreligiosity that allowed him to celebrate the powerless Church. He was the vanished clergyman, he renounced priestly power to live in the silent eloquence of a mission. According to some of his friends, whom I have the privilege to meet and befriend, he would simply light a candle on the table.

8 For more on Illich and utopia, see the article Leonídio, A., & Leão Neto, E. P. de S. (2019). *A utopia de Ivan Illich*. Diálogos Latinoamericanos.

A Gothic Approach: Reading Maritain after Reading Cayley

by Robert Kugelmann

I first encountered Ivan Illich when he came to Dallas with Barbara Duden and others to think about body history. What I recall most vividly was being awakened—for me—to a new way to look at experience. I had been, up to that point, trying to take an archetypal approach, along the lines of James Hillman. As I was not an analyst or a psychotherapist, I was dissatisfied with what I was doing: it lacked a grounding in some praxis. Then came Dr Storch and his 18th century patients who, according to Duden, did not experience their bodies as we do.[1] The historicity of experience, of phenomena, of perception, of thought styles, of matter even, grabbed my imagination. I studied Illich's earlier work, especially *Medical Nemesis*. His incisive critiques of contemporary institutions were clear enough, but their sources remained obscure. Lee Hoinacki taught me that the work of Thomas Aquinas was fundamental to Illich's ways of approaching modern certainties, although Thomas alone would not have necessarily led Illich in the directions that he followed. I am not arguing otherwise.

Nevertheless, an insight into Illich's deployment of Thomistic concepts emerged in his use of "subsistence." In *Toward a History of Needs*, Illich contrasted subsistence with "professionally certified lack, need, and poverty."[2] He proposed:

1 Barbara Duden, *The Woman beneath the Skin*: *A Doctor's Patients in Eighteenth Century Germany*, trans. Thomas Dunlap (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991).

2 Ivan Illich, *Toward a History of Needs* (Berkeley: Heyday Books, 1978), 52.

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> to recover the term [subsistence] by speaking about modern subsistence. Let us call modern subsistence the style of life that prevails in a postindustrial economy in which people have succeeded in reducing their market dependence, and have done so by protecting—by political means—a social infrastructure in which techniques and tools are used primarily to generate use-values unmeasured and unmeasurable by professional need-makers.[3]

This kind of subsistence fosters what Illich called—and attempted to keep as a non-technical term—"aliveness" in individuals and communities. "Personal aliveness contributes [the area of subsistence] to social reality," and that is distinct from what "formal economic activities" contribute to social reality.[4] Subsistence consists in minimizing economic neediness, and aliveness flourishes when people can maximize their lives outside consumer dependence upon technological goods and services.

There is, however, a deeper connection between aliveness and subsistence, to be found in Aquinas' analysis of "the person." Following Boethius, Aquinas defined the person as "an individual substance of a rational nature" (I, Q.29, art. 1). A person "subsists." Subsistence is "that mode of existence which is self-contained and independent of any subject, and also a being that exists in this manner, synonym of *hypostasis*, *res subsistens*, *persona*, i.e., both that which exists for itself and not in another and also the manner of existence."[5] Persons subsist, that is to say, they are not constituent parts of

3 Illich, 1978, 52.

4 Ivan Illich, "Subsistence," in *Powers that make us human*, ed. Kenneth Vaux (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985), 50.

5 Roy J. Deferrari, Sister M. Inviolata Barry, and Ignatius McGuiness, I. (ed.), *A Lexicon of St. Thomas Aquinas based on the Summa Theologica and Selected Passages of his Other Works* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1948), 1063.

something else. A human hand, for example, does not subsist, since it is part of the body. In economic terms, subsistence is relative to the degree that individuals are not simply dependent on consumer goods but make their own living.

In this respect, Illich was—not a Thomist—but Thomistically informed. Reading Cayley, I discovered that this Thomistic streak in Illich's work ran deep, and that the key to this streak was the work of the French Thomistic philosopher, Jacques Maritain. In the late 1940s, Illich had studied Aquinas with Maritain, who at that time was France's ambassador to the Vatican.[6] Illich did not become a Neoscholastic, which was a type of Scholastic philosophy that systematized Thomas and other Thomistic thinkers ahistorically, and which was the official orthodoxy of the Church at the time, especially in its fight against modernism. The goal of Neoscholastic thought was, in the words of Pope Leo XIII, who championed the "return" to Thomas, *vetera novis augere et perficere* (strengthen and complete the old by aid of the new).[7] Illich (1992) recalled Maritain's "*Gothic* approach, both narrow and precise, and extraordinarily illuminating … [which] laid the Thomistic foundations of my entire perceptual mode."[8] He continued, saying that "I experienced Thomism—no, *Thomas*—as I discovered him through Jacques Maritain, as the architecture which has made me intellectually free to move … without getting dispersed."[9] The metaphors he used, "foundations," "architecture," and "move," are related to Maritain's "*Gothic* approach." It is worthwhile to pause an exploration of subsistence to understand a bit better Gothic architecture, and what kinds of movements it fosters.

6 David Cayley, *Ivan Illich: An Intellectual Journey* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2021), 33.

7 Pope Leo XIII, *Aeterni patris*, 1879, Section 24.

8 Illich, in David Cayley (ed.), *Ivan Illich in Conversation* (Toronto: House of Anansi Press, 1992), 150.

9 Illich, in Cayley, 1992, 150.

Maritain supplied a guiding thought:

> The radiating dissolution of the Middle Ages and of its sacral forms is the engendering of a secular civilization—of a civilization not only secular, but which separates itself progressively from the Incarnation. It is still, if you wish, the age of the Son of man: but in which man passes from the cult of the God-man, of the Word made man, to the cult of humanity, of sheer man.
>
> To characterize as briefly as possible the spirit of the epoch dominated by the humanist Renaissance and by the Reformation, let us say that it has wished to proceed to an anthropocentric rehabilitation of the creature, of which a palpable symbol, if one sought in religious architecture a correspondence of the soul, could be found in the substitution of the Baroque style (very beautiful in itself, moreover) for the Roman and Gothic styles.[10]

According to Maritain, the modern world originated in the Renaissance, with a turning away from the transcendent dimension of life, a secularization of the Christian message.[11] Illich developed much further the thesis that modernity was not simply a secularization of the Christian message but a corruption of Christianity. What is at issue here is that Illich's approach to social issues was grounded in Christianity and in the Incarnation as the pivot of history. His work is incomprehensible without acknowledging the primacy of the transcendent dimension of human living.

Maritain's colleague at Princeton's Institute of Advanced Studies, Erwin Panofsky, already addressed what a

10 Jacques Maritain, *Integral Humanism: Temporal and Spiritual Problems of a new Christendom*, trans. J. W. Evans (New York: Charles Scribner, 1968), 15.

11 W J Schultz, *Jacques Maritain's social critique and his personalism* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario, 1982).

Gothic approach could mean in his *Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism*. Gothic art and Scholasticism shared "a mental habit—reducing this overworked cliché to its precise Scholastic sense as a 'principle that regulates the act.'"[12] Maritain's Gothic approach provided such a "principle that regulates the act" for Illich.

We can specify this mental habit in a number of ways, drawing on Panofsky:

(1) This mental habit was a search for "the unity of truth."[13] This meant for the Scholastics that ultimately there were not two truths, one of faith and one of reason, and it meant that all truths lead to the Divine. In Illich's writing, this search was often veiled, and Cayley shows the extent of this search, especially in seeing the Incarnation as the central event in history.[14]

(2) This mental habit took shape as *manifestatio* or "clarification," "a system of thought complete and self-sufficient within its own limits yet setting itself apart from the realm of revelation, it became necessary to 'manifest' the completeness, self-sufficiency, and limitedness of the system of thought."[15] For Panofsky, this resulted in the formalism of Scholastic writing, including Aquinas' arrangement of arguments, objections, and replies, all highly structured "according to a system of homologous parts and parts of parts."[16] In Illich, it showed itself in his interrogation of "certainties," and not in any obvious Scholastic formalism.

(3) This mental habit, or disposition, entailed *concordantia*, "the acceptance and ultimate reconciliation of contradictory

12 Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I-II, qu. 49, art. 3, c, in Erwin Panofsky, Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism (New York: New American Library, 1985, 21.

13 Panofsky, 28.

14 Cayley, 2021.

15 Panofsky, 30-31.

16 Panofsky, 31.

possibilities."[17] We see *concordantial* in Illich's position on the *corruptio optimi pessima*, especially in his analysis of "life" as an idol, although it also shows in his critiques of modern institutions, such as medicine and education, which become self-destructive and counter-productive when they exceed certain limits. Within limits, these innovations do good, but the worm of evil lies within them.

Subsistence was a Scholastic term as we have seen, referring to the mode of existence of a person. Subsistence means that a person is not a monad, enclosed upon itself. In fact, we can contrast the person, as Illich used the term, with "possessive individuals,"[18] that is, the social units "who live in an environment where values are scarce by their very nature, and who make each of their decisions in light of some marginal utility,"[19] and whose relationships with others are contractual. Modern institutions serve possessive individuals, and eclipse the person.

This contrast between the possessive individual and the person that is everywhere in Illich's writing, owes much, I claim, to Maritain, and the contrast was part of the Gothic approach that Illich took. For Maritain, "individuals" are parts of the social order to which they have obligations and rights. We are individuals by virtue of being material beings, although we are not, in Scholastic thought, simply material beings, since we are ensouled, the soul being the formative principle of living. We are also persons, and it is important to note that in Aquinas, humans are called "persons" analogically, God being the perfection of what it means to be a person. For Maritain:

17 Panofsky, 64.

18 C. B. Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism: Hobbes to Locke* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962).

19 Illich, 1985, 48.

> a Person is essentially a spiritual totality, characterized by independence. A Person is a universe to itself, a universe of knowledge, love and freedom, a whole which cannot be subordinated as a part, except with regard to such wholes to which it can be related through the instrumentality of knowledge and love. Personality is an analogical and transcendent perfection, which is fully realized only in God, the Pure Act.[20]

For Maritain, these two, individuality and personality, are not separate realities: "Our whole being is an individual by reason of that which derives from matter, and a person by reason of that in us which derives from spirit."[21] We are not simply and automatically persons, even though that is our potentiality, our telos: "he himself, in the moral order, must win his liberty and his personality. In other words … his action can follow the bent either of personality or of material individuality."[22] Maritain's critique of the modern world rests upon this notion of the person.

We cannot understand the person in this sense without considering love, according to Maritain. Personhood is subsistence:

> the ultimate achievement by which the creative influx seals, within itself, a nature face to face with the whole order of existence so that the existence which it receives is *its own* existence and *its own* perfection. Personality is the subsistence of the spiritual soul communicated to the human composite. Because, in our substance, it is an

20 Jacques Maritain, J., "The Immortality of Man," *The Review of Politics*, 3, no.4(1941): 416.

21 Jacques Maritain, *The Person and the Common Good*, trans. J. J. Fitzgerald, (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1966) 43.

22 Maritain, 1966, 44.

> imprint or seal which enables it to possess its existence, to perfect and give itself freely, personality testifies to the generosity or expansiveness in being which an incarnate spirit derives from its spiritual nature and which constitutes, within the secret depths of our ontological structure, a source of dynamic unity, of unification from within.[23]

Finally, being a person "requires communication with *other* and *the others* in the order of knowledge and love."[24] The human person has a form that is an *imago Dei*, and the Trinitarian God is the ultimate form of subsistence in relationships of love. This understanding of what it means to be a person underlies all of Illich's analysis of the modern age. It is not the only thing, to be sure, but it does reflect what Illich may have learned from Maritain's Gothic approach.

A final aspect of the Gothic approach is that it occurs at the intersection of the vertical and horizontal dimensions. A Gothic cathedral, compared to earlier styles, accentuates the vertical dimension, the human aspiration for the divine and the divine presence among us, manifested in the light that comes from on high. Simultaneously, there is the horizontal dimension, that of social life, worship and commerce, baptisms, weddings, and funerals, for example. If one were to emphasize the vertical dimension in Illich's analyses—stress too much his grounding in faith, one would miss the threats and realities that he tackled in his critiques of modern certainties. If one were to neglect the vertical dimension, however, then one would miss why the critiques matter.

Let me give a few examples of this approach as it

23 Maritain, 1966, 40-41.

24 Maritain, 1966, 42.

informed Illich's work. First, there is his critique of systems as the structure of contemporary institutions. Cayley, drawing on Illich and on Katherine Hayles, points out that "the age of systems," in which we reside, is self-regulating, abstract, and without thresholds that open to an outside.[25] The worst part of the age of systems is not that we are increasingly enclosed in virtual realities. The worst is that the absence of boundaries tempts us to forget that we are persons, in Maritain's sense. Depersonalization in this specific sense is a contemporary vice. We remain "individuals" in Maritain's sense, even if individuality is redefined as a self-regulating subsystem who manages risks and potentialities for optimization of the use of the system's benefits.

At this juncture, I must introduce a *sed contra*, to use a Scholastic term for making an objection to a thesis. Emmanuel Levinas, in a brief essay, "Heidegger, Gagarin and Us" challenges the Heideggerian critique of technology as rendering us "unknowingly manipulated by calculations, statistics and planning."[26] Yuri Gagarin, on April 12, 1961, was launched into earth orbit, becoming the first human being ever to leave the earth and see it from above. Gagarin's orbit of the earth could symbolize the enframement of nature by technology. Levinas, however, while acknowledging the threats of technology to our personhood and to the well-being of the natural world, sees something else going on. For Levinas, technology "wrenches us out of the Heideggerian world and the superstitions surrounding Place. From this point on, an opportunity appears to us: to perceive men outside the situation in which they are placed, and let the human face shine in all its

25 Cayley, 2021, 246-251. See N. Katherine Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature and Infomatics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).

26 Emmanuel Levinas, "Heidegger, Gagarin and Us," in *Difficult Freedom: Essays on Judaism*, trans. Seán Hand (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 231.

nudity."[27] Gagarin's achievement "is that he left the *Place*."[28] Technology breaks the spell of local customs and opens up possibilities for universality.

One might say, Gagarin left the flesh behind. Cayley devotes a great deal of attention to Illich's use of "flesh," as opposed to the body, the anatomical body, the body as perceived with the medical gaze.[29] Forgetfulness of the flesh leaves us bewildered without anchor in reckoning with the Incarnation. While he says much about it, I cite one passage: "Flesh, then, names an inchoate dimension of experience that each age constructs differently as its 'epoch-specific' body.… Flesh names the element of continuity—the underlying stuff that we are. It is what bears the 'image of God' that was impressed upon Adam and Eve and what intermingles with God in the Incarnation."[30] At the same time, flesh is rootedness in Place. It masks the "nudity of the face." Something like this was recognized in the work of John Cassian, one of the founders of western monasticism in the early fifth century. The monk, in order to achieve purity of heart and an approach to the Almighty, had to separate himself from the flesh. This meant not only fasting, vigils, prayers, following the rule of the house; it also meant separation from family, which was flesh of my flesh. There is another journey that we take, one that leaves Place behind, the ethical journey of Abraham from the land of his birth to an unknown land, never to return. Ultimately, then, being a person is to be open to the other and otherness even in a technological system.

In Scholastic argumentation, there must be a reply

27 Levinas, 232-233.

28 Levinas, 233.

29 Cayley, 2021, 254-272.

30 Cayley, 2021, 272.

to the sed contra. Let us grant that technological systems, in which we increasingly dwell, arise from aspirations of the human soul. That in itself does not guarantee that "leaving the Place" is benign. Technological systems include nuclear weapons as well, serving as self-regulating keepers of some semblance of world peace. The genius of "mutually assured destruction" is that the system regulates our behavior, keeping it within limits. To unleash them would assure a flesh-less universality. In this regard, the systems within which we find ourselves open up on horror as well as the ethical relationship. Illich's analyses, which Cayley elucidates, direct our attention to this intersection of good and evil, an intersection with no beyond.

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Systems unexpectedness, flatness and counterproductivity

by Nicola Labanca

Preamble

David Cayley's latest book is an invaluable source of knowledge on Illich's thought and life. It will very likely remain a fundamental reading for future generations interested in this important intellectual, in how his thought developed during his lifetime, and in his important legacy. In his book, Cayley not only provides clear explanations of concepts that are keys to understanding Illich but also offers his own deep reflections on a large number of central questions that Illich seems to have intentionally framed in a way that allows readers to continue his research. For this article, I would like to take up the concept of *systems* by discussing views and perspectives that might contribute to further develop those I have found discussed in Cayley's book and Illich's publications.

Constraints of length prevent me from extensively recording the precious insights offered by both Cayley and Illich into how systems mark the beginning of a new and extremely disembodying age for contemporary societies. What I will do here is just to reflect 1) on systems aspects I have *not* found discussed in Cayley's book and 2) on how these aspects might allow contrasting the condition of counterproductivity that Illich associated with the large-scale diffusion of instruments or tools with the new condition of systems or systemic counterproductivity. These aspects seem to me particularly important at a time when systems

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are probably taking us to a regime of deep uncertainty and destructive instability. New technologies and crises appear to create a permanent and qualitative change in the form of the social structure. From pandemics to climate change, artificial intelligence, and cyber wars, small local or regional perturbations are able to unexpectedly propagate at planetary scales with unforeseeable consequences. In my opinion, this transformation in the degree and kind of connection between parts of the global social structure are closely linked to transformations occurring in techno-science under the aegis of complex systems science and reflect same underlying social imaginaries and strategies conceived to cope with increasing uncertainty.

Hence, I will start by focusing on some insufficiently acknowledged features of *complex systems science*, as developing since mid-20th century. Although certainly not representing an integrated and consistent body of thought, complex systems science exhibits some key features that emerge from its roots in cybernetics studies on the design and application of same control mechanisms in the animal and the machine and from information technologies generated through these studies. The description of these key features shows, among others, how complex systems science attempts to encompass and integrate the so-called hard and soft sciences while going beyond them.

Complex systems are simultaneously the object of investigation of complex systems science and the outcome of a specific, recent, and still on-going social construction. Accordingly, I believe these features can also indicate something relevant about where societies are currently heading. For example, they allow understanding how, in the age of systems, science and societies have consciously started exhibiting a condition of general and permanent contradiction or "*anomia*" (*i.e.* of ab-

sence of law). In so far as it corresponds to a condition of creativity and liveliness, *anomia* is probably not a bad thing *per se*. Nevertheless, with systems, *anomia* is achieved in a general situation of indistinctness and unlimited power where science and societies seem capable of any kind of manipulation and hybridization involving inanimate objects, humans, animals, and other natural beings at a planetary level.

To resist and contain this dangerous and destructive trend might require the extensive practice of a complementary type of relationality compared to that impressed in systems. As I discuss in the final section of this article, relations that people entertain within systems rely on deep processes of homogenization that are the outcome of techno-science assumptions concerning how all natural entities generate from an original sameness and produce, among others, the suffocating sensation that we are all living in a same world while consuming same resources and depleting available natural resource budgets. The complementary type of relationality I refer to assumes instead an original diversity and irreducibility between beings entering in relation and is therefore intrinsically self-limiting. In this respect, Illich's and Cayley's reflections are extremely enlightening, and I hope to be able to address this last point in a future essay.

Unboundedness and unpredictability of systems

The first two key features of complex systems science can be grasped by observing how it can, in principle, deconstruct the laws of physics and employ information theory to that end.

Thanks to Stuart Kauffman[1] I have realized one sim-

1 See e.g. Kauffman, S., 2000. *Investigations*. Oxford University Press or the youtube video entitled "What's Life? Answering Shcrödinger" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xUSRUKOAQ7w

ple and very general fact that neither my university teachers of physics fully addressed nor several physicist colleagues of mine have fully grasped. Take for example, the case of the differential equations whereby Newton's laws of classical physics are expressed mathematically and consider their application to the study of the motion of a set of billiard balls of which you know positions and speeds at a given time. Physics teachers routinely explain that the dynamics of any physical system (*i.e.* the position and speed of all balls at any time in our example) can, in principle, be determined as solutions to the differential equations, provided the system boundary conditions (*i.e.* the space limits determined by the balls and the billiard table in our example) are specified and known *beforehand*; it does not matter whether these boundaries are assumed to be fixed in time, as it is the case of the billiard table, or if these boundaries vary over time in predetermined ways.

In so doing, these teachers implicitly convey the message that given boundary conditions are always definable for any natural system and that the application of the Newtonian laws is therefore universal.[2] In so far as it omits to address important cases where the application of these laws is not possible, this approach is however certainly reductionist. It does not include all those cases of systems dynamics where boundary conditions cannot be known beforehand or where boundaries are under construction or under destruction while systems dynamics are developing.

2 It might be objected that boundary conditions are not always needed to define systems dynamics. Newton's laws seem applicable also in an empty space and tell us that, in the absence of external forces, material bodies either remain in a static condition or move along straight lines at constant speed and/or rotate at constant angular speed around their center of mass. However, boundaries are also implicated in this case, since no material body can be defined without a boundary between this body and its external space. In the example of the billiard balls, boundary conditions not only define the billiard table, but also the balls!

The 'wicked questions' that these teachers avoid in this way include: how can the evolution of systems whose boundary conditions cannot be known beforehand be possibly studied? and what happens in the case of natural systems whose boundary conditions depend on the systems themselves that are, therefore, inseparable from their environment? This last is for example the case of billiard balls bouncing against the border of a billiard table while this border is assembling or is collapsing, or the case of species evolving in relation to their environment while the environment evolves in relation to them.

The first question may refer to situations where boundary conditions could, in principle, still be identified but are either simply not known or cannot be guessed with sufficient precision. The second question puts instead the very idea of definable boundary conditions into doubt and suggests the need for other approaches.

Contrary to what the example of the application of Newton's laws might suggest, the questions concerning unknown, unknowable, and mutable boundary conditions are very general and not limited to the realms of classical physics. They also apply to the probabilities used for risk calculations, quantum physics, statistics, genetics, and more. For example, the energy conservation principle, and thermodynamics laws in general, require a predefined space wherein they can be applied and verified, and this precondition must be fulfilled both by equilibrium and non-equilibrium thermodynamics, as investigated, for instance, by Ilya Prigogine. Analogously, probabilities and quantum wave functions can only be defined when the set of all possible system states can be established beforehand in such a way that the sum of probabilities over all these states equals 1. In case of human body genetics, such bounded space of options is then for example represented by the huge but limited number of combinations of the

20 amino acids that make up all possible proteins and by the sequences of bases in the genes that encode these proteins.

This necessary condition of knowable boundary conditions is so general that it is probably not wrong to conclude that it concerns any science and research field which employs mechanistic or probabilistic laws to study systems evolutions. However, it also implies that the calculations and quantitative estimates based on the application of such laws are nonsensical if a predefined space of possibilities cannot be identified with sufficient confidence.

The assumption of a bounded space of possibilities also explains the primacy of information and information theories over energy principles that has come to be implicitly acknowledged in scientific explanations of the generation of systems dynamics of various kind (pre-existing boundaries and constraints can indeed always be associated with some sort of pre-existing information).

One of the merits of complexity science is that it has led to the acknowledgement that systems and situations where the application of mechanistic and probabilistic laws may be highly misleading are routine. Although complexity science abstractly describes these systems and situations as concerning aggregates made of many entities in strong interactions, such descriptions only indicate that 1) these are aggregates where interactions prevail over entities themselves and that 2) these strongly interacting aggregates are being studied in a phase when these contingent entities and their defining boundaries could either be still under formation, or in dissolution, or could not be known with sufficient precision.[3]

3 Concerning this last point, it might be interesting to note that systems boundaries are implicated also in cases where complexity is associated with non-linear dynamics and chaos generated by uncertain knowledge of the initial position of systems' strongly interacting constituents. Uncertain knowledge of initial positions can indeed be assimilated to uncertain knowledge of constituents' *boundaries*.

In this way, complex systems science appears to leave behind the world where deterministic and probabilistic laws are applicable and enters a wider world of evolution and change where these laws represent just a particular case. In such a world of deep uncertainty and unpredictability, the bounded condition necessary for application of scientific laws can even appear as an oddity deserving inquiry.

The interesting thing is that this shift and enlargement is typically accomplished by assimilating human beings to non-human beings, dead matter, and machines and by assuming that their creation and evolution can be studied according to same principles. By addressing the question of how stable boundary conditions are generated in the universe, complex system scientists typically presume to be able to explain evolving life and the evolution of the material universe according to same principles. And the answer they generally give is astonishingly simple: life and inanimate matter are both generally assumed to be created and evolve through endogenous and self-recursive processes, which is to say, that life, matter, and boundary conditions are assumed to be *self-generated*.

Rather than accepting the limits to knowledge rooted in the ignorance of how boundary conditions get constituted, complex systems scientists generally presume to overcome these limits by replacing unknown boundary conditions with known processes that operate in both the machine and the animal.

By addressing the question of how stable boundary conditions are generated in this way, these scientists apparently situate themselves in a world of continuous change and disequilibrium where stability, substance, or permanence are the contingent and temporary outcome of *recursivity*. This can be verified by examining some definitions of complex-

ity provided by its proponents: (i) a resonance between "a recipe inducing processes and processes inducing recipes"[4]; (ii) a resonance between "DNA making metabolism and metabolism making DNA"[5]; (iii) a process of self-organization driven by "informed autocatalytic loops"[6]; (iv) a process of self-organization "closed to efficient causation", i.e. a process that, rather than being the expression of efficient causation, is about expressing a final cause about reproducing itself and making itself more adaptable[7]; (v) learning about the validity of beliefs by using them to guide action[8]; (vi) "a difference that makes a difference."[9]

All these definitions implicitly show how complexity implies a world of self-recursive processes (also known as feedback loops) where all stable entities are created and destroyed through these processes. Reminiscent of the dizzying effects generated by Escher's drawings and Baron Munchausen tales of pulling himself out of a swamp by his pigtail, complexity science directs attention on the processes of construction and destruction rather than on the elements from which edifices are built and demolished in the world. However, as my initial considerations aimed to point out, unbounded entities reducible to processes can occur in completely unpredictable ways that escape all foresight.

4 Simon, H.A., 1962. *The architecture of complexity*. Proc. Am. Philos. Soc., 106 (6), pp. 467-482.

5 Prigogine, I., 1982, *From being to becoming*, Brit. J. Philos. Sci., 33 (3), pp. 325-329.

6 Odum, H.T., 1971, *Environment*, Power, and Society, Wiley-Interscience, New York.

7 Rosen, R., 1991, *Life Itself: a comprehensive Inquiry into the Nature, Origin, and Fabrication of Life* Columbia University Press.

8 Pattee, H.H., 1995. *Evolving self-reference: matter, symbols, and semantic closure.* Commun. Cognit. – Artif. Intell., 12 (1/2), pp. 9-27

9 Bateson, G., 1972. *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*. The University Chicago Press.

Systems flat ontology

In a complex world of unbounded entities that contingently emerge and dissolve into processes, hierarchies assume this same ephemeral quality. De-constructability of hierarchies represents in my opinion a third key feature of complex systems emerging in contemporary societies. The concept of "panarchy", as developed by Gunderson and Holling, provides an example of how this condition can be assumed to be achieved.[10] Panarchy proponents explain how complex systems of people and nature are dynamically organized and structured across scales of space and time through sets of nested adaptive cycles and how hierarchies can be the outcome of processes propagating between the large and small scales. Representing how hierarchical levels in socio-ecological systems can operate at own paces, "protected from above by slower, larger levels but invigorated from below by faster, smaller cycle of innovation",[11] panarchy accommodates creativity with conservation and allows deconstructing any spatial or temporal hierarchy, scale, or macro/micro distinction into processes.

Contrary to what sometimes assumed by complex systems scientists,[12] the fact that all entities and hierarchies populating complex systems can be dissolved into processes implies that complex systems ontology is actually *flat*. Accordingly, any distinction between humans and non-humans or between animate and inanimate must be considered as the

10 Gunderson, L. H., and C. S. Holling, editors. 2002. *Panarchy: understanding transformations in human and natural systems.* Island Press, Washington, D.C., USA.

11 Holloing, C.S., 2001. *Understanding the complexity of economic, ecological, and social systems.* Ecosystems, Vol. 4:390-405.

12 On this point, see e.g. the discussion presented in Cilliers, P., 2001. *Boundaries, Hierarchies and Networks in Complex Systems.* International Journal of Innovation Management, Vol. 5, No.2, pp. 135-147

contingent outcome of history and evolution. Most likely, it is complex system science's roots in cybernetics that plays a key role in this respect. The identification and equivalences between humans and non-humans are established through the cybernetic assumption that the same control mechanisms are at work in both the animal and the machine, the stable parts of which are, e.g., the space of possibilities constituted by the sequences of bases in the genes that encode animal proteins and the space of options constituted by information stored in computers, respectively.

The flat ontology of complex systems is a particularly important feature that connects complex systems science to some important branches of contemporary sociology notably the approaches inspired by actor-network theory as developed by Bruno Latour and by social practice theories informed by Pierre Bourdieu.[13] Both the actors populating Latour's networks and the practices constituting the social of social practice theorists are indeed completely decomposable into pure action/performance/process according to interpretations that can hardly be distinguished from those provided by complex systems science.[14] As further argued below, it then follows that the assumed flatness of systems ontology means

13 Relational and process thinking associated with complex systems science can, for example, be seen constantly at work in Latour approaches when he deconstructs *actors* (i.e. stabilized competences) into *actants* (i.e. unstable performances), or when he deconstructs texts taken from the fields of humanities and science to demonstrate that same processes of social construction are at stake in these two fields (see for example Latour's lecture entitled "*How Better Register the Agency of Things: Semiotics*" and available at http://www.bruno-latour.fr/node/562.html), or when, in his book "Facing Gaia" he contrasts Lovelock's interpretation with maternal views of Gaia to argue that the ontology of the Earth system has to be considered as flat by science (See Latour, B., 2017. *Facing Gaia. Eight Lectures on the New Climatic Regime*. Polity Press, p. 101).

14 Latour himself seems to even claim that a *flat ontology* is what implicitly allows distinguishing complex systems science and social science from political theology and what makes these sciences "a science". (see Latour's lecture entitled "*Gaia is not a Figure of Totality*" as available at http://www.bruno-latour.fr/node/589.html).

that complex systems originate from a world of pure activity and sameness rather than, as previously hinted, from a world of constant change and disequilibrium. Disequilibrium and change could indeed hardly be considered as an original characteristic in a complex world where every difference is flattened into processes.

Knowledge and contradiction in systems

A fourth connected feature inherited by cybernetics concerns how complex systems science relates to logical categories and contradiction in its assimilation of learning and perception processes to biological processes of regulation and to computational processes realized through machines. Gregory Bateson, one of the fathers of cybernetics, has provided enlightening examples ranging from epigenesis[15] to the phenomenology of perception and linguistic to show how single entities, functional categories, and meanings co-emerge from networks of relationships whereby a multiplicity of entities, categories, and meanings are simultaneously defined.[16]

Just as it aims to encompass and go beyond modern science, complex systems thinking also aims to encompass and go beyond Aristotelian categories and the associated law of the excluded third. When entities and (logical) categories become the provisional outcome of recursive processes and

15 As reported in Wikipedia, "epigenesis is the process by which plants, animals and fungi develop from a seed, spore or egg through a sequence of steps in which cells differentiate and organs form".

16 An example from linguistics should clarify: Bateson "maintains that the letter "p" would have no meaning if, for example, it was not part of the word "perhaps". The word "perhaps" would have in its turn no meaning if, for example, it were not part of the sentence "perhaps this is soap". This sentence would in its turn have no meaning without the context where it is stated and this meaning would be different if the sentence were mentioned, for example, in a bathroom, on a stage or within the reasoning presented in this text". See Labanca, N., Editor 2017. *Complex Systems and Social Practices in Energy Transitions. Framing Energy Sustainability in the Time of Renewables*. Springer, Switzerland, pp. 26-27.

relationships with non-entities, the law of the excluded third becomes indefensible (when *A* and *not-A* are the simultaneous outcome of recursive processes, there is no room left for an excluded third). Although this might lead to the conclusion that complex systems thinking generates and resolves contradiction by dissolving it into processes, it rather seems that, in a complex world, contradiction moves from the realm of categories/entities to the realm of processes/actions in a peculiar way. In a complex world made of recursive relationships and couplings, *transitive action* (i.e. action that transits from a subject to an object) and *inaction* becomes indistinguishable because subjects and objects become indistinguishable. When processes overcome substance, action can indeed become indistinguishable from *re-action* to environment inputs. In such a world, individuals might never know whether they are part of a kind of thermostat system (i.e. negative feedback loops) that nullifies their initiatives or of an amplifying system (i.e. positive feedback loops) whereby their smallest and unnoticed actions produce catastrophes.

The peculiar way complex systems science relates to Aristotelian categories is also reflected in how knowledge and learning come to be connected in the extremely uncertain world of complexity. A first and provisional moment of knowledge application, that might be called "categorical" or "normative", represents the moment when given laws hold. A second and more preeminent moment of learning concerns instead the unknowable transformations (for which contingency is typically invoked by scientists) whereby new categories and relations get created through the establishment of new feedback loops. An interesting aspect of this co-constitution of the two moments is the role that information technologies and extensive surveillance play in complex socio-technical systems. Extensive surveillance through information tech-

nologies is becoming the major research and social strategy to address the problem of the deeply uncertain evolution of complex systems is faced in areas like public health, weather forecasts, climate change, etc. (if I cannot know how systems will evolve, then it is better to surveil them as close as possible!). At the same time however, surveillance technologies also constitute the retroaction whereby existing categories and identities are becoming more and more provisional and fragile in an hyperconnected world, as for example testified by the continuous update of user profiles operated by learning machines for innumerable purposes on the internet.

In this way, knowledge seems to come to be constituted through a *synchronic* and a *diachronic* moment where the diachronic moment retroacts on the synchronic moment by making it more and more unstable.[17] While logics, statistics, probabilities, and algorithms of various kinds are used synchronically, ever more frequent and strict surveillance is supposed to compensate for what cannot be predicted diachronically. Notice that this same strategy is being progressively applied in earth system science, biology, medicine, and more thanks to the kind of information available with computer technologies, genetic codes, etc. Through this strategy, science seems to face the challenges generated by fundamental unpredictability of complex dynamics by increasing surveillance and updating the field of associated possibilities. Whether it is information in climate change models or genetic information regulating body health, 'information' appears, synchronically,

17 Among other things, this transformation seems to reflect quite well the increasing prevalence of spatial analyses (and the multiplication of maps produced thanks to surveillance and information technology) over temporal analyses in the study of systems change through modelling (e.g. in weather forecasts, genetics, etc.). Surveillance technologies allow ever increasing elaboration rates of data gathered on ever larger and finer scales and models employed to reproduce how change occurs can therefore be ever more frequently adjusted while the type of variables and parameters these models rely on are modified.

to have an instructional value within a bounded options space, while diachronically, it has formative power.

Although the options space is *diachronically* expandable (this expandability being identified by geneticists and cyberneticians with evolution, creativity, and liveliness of the entities they deal with), it must remain or, must be assumed to remain, *synchronically* bounded for the kind of coded information at stake to work. As I have already suggested, it is not accidental that such Neo-Darwinist view of how knowledge progresses coincides with current mainstream interpretations of natural evolution and of the evolution of computer technologies. Advances in complex systems science have been founded on the assimilation of natural processes to the continuously expanding storage capacity and calculation power of information technologies. This assimilation of the natural to the technological is achieved by conceiving systems as a closed options space in the shorter term and as an open options space in the longer term. As also reflected in the flatness and emptiness of its underlying ontology, this close assimilation is however what makes the resulting complexity artificial and radically different from natural complexity.[18] At the socio-technical level, the increasingly uncertain regimes resulting from human-made complexity make its ever-larger options space ever more plastic and unhinged to any connections with truth. At the same time, ever more pervasive surveillance strategies that sustain this development make biopolitical drifts within societies more likely whenever extreme events induced by complexification occur, no matter whether these extremes concern weather, energy supply, human health, or finance.

18 Notice however that this difference is not certainly observable from within complex systems science, as this science typically assumes and proceeds through the assimilation of the natural to the technological.

Systems counterproductivity

Illich's and Cayley's reflections have helped me better understand systems and complex systems science as co-related social constructions. They represent a shift in the social imaginary of modernity from one centered on such technical instruments as the clock or the heat engine, to one where the computer provides the central metaphor for understanding science and society. If my considerations offered so far can add anything to what Illich already saw 40 years ago, that concerns how socially constructed systems and associated artifacts are forming deeply uncertain regimes characterized by ever more frequent, unique, unexpected, and extreme events of various kinds at different scales. While developing approaches that go beyond those based on reproducibility of observed phenomena and beyond probabilities and risk assessments, contemporary systems science is reframing ideas of objectivity and the subject-object distinction that had characterized modern science until the mid-20th century. In the Anthropocene, the supposed symmetry between subject and object presumed by complex systems science paradoxically demands recognizing the blindness and uncontrollability of human agency on a planetary scale, and the resulting uncontrollable reactions that confer to the Earth system a disquieting and vindictive subjectivity.[19]

Further peculiar characteristics of contemporary systems can be identified by looking at the material side of this human-made complexity and at the changes occurring in the social imaginary around instruments and instrumentality.[20]

Computer technologies through which human-made

19 In this respect, see e.g. Hamilton, C., 2017. *Defiant Earth. The Fate of Humans in the Anthropocene*. Polity Press.

20 David Cayley latest book discusses extensively how Illich believed that instruments and ideas of instrumentality arose around the XIIth century and gave way to the age of systems during the XXth century.

complexity is being socially constructed are best *not* understood as instruments (i.e. means conceived to enable the achievement of specific ends), but rather as artificial prostheses that enable the achievement of an ever-increasing variety of ends (the higher the number of performed functions and ends achieved through computers, the more people have to remain attached to them and the more computers come to resemble to artificial prostheses). Since they program both means and ends, computer technologies exemplify and constitute the simultaneously closed yet ever expandable space[21] wherein people are induced to live. When contrasted to instruments, the prosthetic character of these relatively new artifacts can offer particular insights into how systems generate a distinctive type of counterproductivity that reflects a situation of permanent crisis.

Instrumental counterproductivity was carefully distinguished by Illich from other effects like so-called externalities and diminishing returns on investments. Instrumental counterproductivity mainly concerns the end associated with a given instrument and the effectiveness of the specific action undertaken with respect to that end. For example, the counterproductivity of cars relies mainly on the fact that cars, beyond a certain scale, become an impediment to mobility.[22] In contrast, systems counterproductivity refers to the effects on the whole system. Specifically, actions undertaken through prosthetic artifacts for given purposes can permanently create unplanned ends and events which can put whole systems' survival at risk. Instrumental counterproductivity is limited to the operationalization of an associated specific conceptual

21 In so far as any function comes to be performed through these protheses, the space where they constrain people is closed. In so far as new functions can always be added and reproduced, this space is always expandable.

22 On this point, see for example the chapter dedicated to *specific counterproductivity* in Illich, I., 1976. *Medical Nemesis: The Expropriation of Health*. Pantheon Books.

category (e.g. mobility, education, etc.). Systems counterproductivity implicates action in general, since action taken for any specific purpose nevertheless rebounds with system wide consequences.

Situations of systems counterproductivity look very similar to situations of potential crowd crushes (like the one sadly occurred in Israel a year ago or a previous case occurred Italy during an open-air concert in Turin). Whatever you do within closely coupled environments can rebound on you unexpectedly, negating the premises that have framed your action.[23] The prosthetic character of artifacts whereby people are integrated into systems[24] might hence render any purposeful action not only potentially and disruptively self-reflexive (within these kinds of system any system part can be tightly coupled to any other system part and any action you undertake can unexpectedly and disruptively rebound on you) but might also render any action whatsoever full of unintended and potentially disruptive implications for the whole system (within these systems you cannot intervene on one function without also potentially and unintentionally altering other potentially vital functions).

Notably, economic transactions and associated exchange values can however transform given instruments into prosthetic artifacts by changing single instruments into a means for a generalized end (i.e. money) and therefore into a means for a large variety of ends. This suggests that money can transform instrumental into systemic counterproductiv-

23 One of the best strategies that might be adopted to face these circumstances would probably be represented by collective inaction and immobility. The tragic thing is that the kind of complexity being socially constructed seems to oblige to stay constantly on the move (I have in mind here how integration into information networks is being accompanied by a progressive reduction in the stocks of existing material, energy and competences that impel the need for constant resources circulation) and activities *suspension* becomes therefore harder and harder to achieve.

24 As mentioned, I intend here a prosthesis as a single means whereby a multiplicity of ends become achievable.

ity. Through economic transactions and associated exchange values, specific instruments can be integrated within many closely coupled networks made of monetary, material and energy flows where situations of systemic counterproductivity can arise.[25] For example, cars become prostheses when their production keeps the economy of whole countries' running and, when this happens, cars become prostheses that cannot be dismissed as, through them, people directly and indirectly get access to food, education, health care, housing, etc.. In these circumstances, cars can become an essential and irreplaceable constituent of the exchange system, no matter whether the average speed achieved by car drivers falls permanently below that achievable by bikers, or the pollution generated by mobility becomes a major health threat, or cars become a major energy consumer.

Moreover, systems counterproductivity can also be ontologically differentiated from instrumental counterproductivity by looking at the radical regimes of technical and conceptual monopoly from which both types of counterproductive emerge. Instrumental counterproductivity emerges typically from extensive homogenization and radical monopoly exercised through single means over all possible alternative modalities whereby people might potentially achieve a same end. For example, when cars become the main means of transport, the employment of alternative transit modalities becomes hindered by accompanying transformations in the urban landscape and in the social practices whereby people commute, shop, etc.. Noticeably, this radical monopoly is however reflected also in the universalization and standardization of the conceptual category operationalized through the means in question (e.g. a specific idea and category of

25 I have realized this point while reading the Italian edition of Jean Robert's latest book (2019) "*L'Età dei Sistemi nel Pensiero dell'Ultimo Illich*", Hermantena.

mobility —passenger miles —is typically operationalized and universalized through the diffusion of cars). In case of instrumental counterproductivity therefore, a loss of flexibility generated in the social texture by this material and conceptual homogenization could unexpectedly generate states of contradiction where the universal category that is being operationalized and its complement become temporarily indistinguishable. To refer again to the case of cars, the loss of flexibility affecting densely populated geographical areas where cars exercise a radical monopoly would expose these areas to unexpected situations of congestion where *mobility* becomes temporarily indistinguishable from *immobility*. However, as instruments still represent something that is detached from people and that people can still leave when not needed, instrumental counterproductivity and associated states of contradiction are somehow still perceivable by people and, above all, this type of counterproductivity is probably still potentially and temporarily reversible (e.g. technical counterproductivity of cars can in principle still be prevented by reducing the number of vehicles in circulation or by using GPS and other control systems to optimize traffic flows).

In case of systems counterproductivity, the large-scale homogenization processes that started with instruments by leading us into a sort of Homogenocene[26] instead achieve a much deeper level of abstraction. These processes manage to flatten universal categories associated with the concepts of life, human, animal, and machine to a common background, nowadays mainly reified through the information flows by which artificial prostheses are put in operation. Rather than interacting with other humans or non-humans, people acting within complex environments are, as a matter of fact, interact-

26 Mann, Charles, C., 2011. *Living in the Homogenocene: the first 500 years*. Knopf, New York

ing with and are inadvertently being reduced to information flows. The common background constituted by these flows represents a kind of ultimate level of indistinctness to which humans, non-humans, and any inanimate object are assumed to be equally reducible.[27] For example, the realization of this deep level of indistinctness is nowadays recognizable in comatose persons, bodies conserved for organs transplantation, or other operationalized conditions where life comes to be identified with some "vital" parameters that are kept within given ranges of variability.

It is very interesting to observe how this condition of indistinctness can generally correspond to a *permanent* state of exception and contradiction where, contrary to homogenization from which instrumental counterproductivity emerges, any particular being comes to be assimilated into the same abstract entities. Resembling a perversion of Nicholas Cusanus's *coincidentia oppositorum* where plurality is united in the Absolute,[28] this condition entails a permanent contradiction in human action between what people expect to get and what they actually get from what they do while integrated into systems.

Elsewhere,[29] I have tried to characterize this contradiction through antinomies that I have named "managing the unexpected", "isolating interconnection", "rational irrational-

27 What I am generally suggesting is that the large-scale diffusion of mentioned prosthetic functioning might represent a *necessary* precondition for the generation of systems. If so, this necessary precondition could be equivalently intended as a condition of large-scale reproduction and employment of technologies enabling the circulation of single and different "artificial" entities (as represented e.g. by monetary, energy, time or information units) that, through the establishment of some principle of equivalence, come to constitute means for the achievement of an increasing number of ends. Among others, this simple fact seems to make these particular entities *scarce* by definition.

28 I owe this insight to David Cayley.

29 See Labanca, N., 2020. *Coronavirus and enaction of human-made complexity paradoxes*. International Journal of Illich Studies, Vol. 7(1) pp. 122-150

ity", "invisible presences" and "deadly vitality." By taking the coronavirus pandemic as a telling example, I have discussed how, in the age of systems, several extreme events are created endogenously by tightly interconnected societies and how systems put people in the paradoxical situation of having to manage the unexpected by preparing for devastating systemic events whose occurrence remain deeply uncertain, without having the possibility of verifying the effectiveness of their anticipatory actions.[30] Our lives behind screens, together with a series of other rational, individual, and selfish behaviors that are proving more and more detrimental at the social level are instead manifestations of the two other permanent contradictions affecting systems that I have named isolating interconnection and rational irrationality. The coronavirus pandemic has then made visible, to a certain extent, the importance of the invisible base made of social and bodily practices on which systems functioning permanently relies (e.g. activities ensuring physical health as carried out by nurses, cleaning ladies, etc., or activities carried out by people providing maintenance of machineries, local farmers, physicians, and, more generally, activities linking the body of people to other people and the body of people to the earth). By reflecting on the paradoxical generation of this invisibility, I argued that these invisible presences are the outcome of a reversal operated by increasing complexification whereby immaterial abstractions like monetary values, energy units, time units, information bits, molecular codes and their combinations are given further reality, while the role of material and bodily entities becomes increasingly invisible although reliance on these latter

30 If the devastating systemic event does not materialize, it can indeed be claimed that the anticipatory action has *not* served to avoid it (nobody can indeed tell with certainty that an extremely uncertain event would have occurred without this action). Same claim can be raised once devastations, though extremely uncertain, occur (nobody can indeed tell what the anticipatory action has allowed preventing).

grows in proportion.

Finally, the antinomy that I name "deadly vitality" represents probably the most relevant type of permanent contradiction led by complexity. In complex environments, life becomes indeed synonymous of intricate circulations of information, energy and materials and, as again shown by the pandemic, these same circulations can become sources of illness and death. The age of systems requires the acknowledgement of this circulatory process that is taking hold in any type of complex system, whether social or biological. The integration into information networks is accompanied by a progressive reduction in the stocks of existing materials, energies and competences and demands therefore ever-increasing resources circulations — to the point that high levels of interconnection can become both source of systems health and collapse caused by enabled large-scale amplifications of any small local accident. Health and illness therefore come to be generated by the same processes and connections and become somehow indistinguishable because life is captured within circulatory processes.[31]

As happens with vaccines whereby bodies' immune-systems are being reprogrammed during coronavirus pandemic, remedies that can be found to systemic crises can represent at best temporary solutions for unexpected events that can constantly arise within mentioned circulations. The chasing of health through the continuous reprogramming of immune-systems that are tightly coupled to an external environment that in turn co-evolves contingently with reprogrammed bodies exemplifies the kind of knowledge that comes to be generated in the age of systems, i.e. a knowledge

31 This circulatory view is, for example, supported in Margulis, L., 1991. *Symbiosis as a source of Evolutionary Innovation*. MIT Press, where Margulis argues that body health depends on the conditions of their *holobiont*, i.e. kind of extensive networks constituted by the body and plenty of symbiotic microbes in constant and reciprocal interaction.

that loses stability and connection to any form of definitive truth while inviting to constant surveillance in order to be continuously managed.

What has nevertheless to be emphasized is that, frighteningly enough, extreme events due to the systemic counterproductivity emerging from permanent contradictions generated by *same* intricate circulations can, in principle, unexpectedly arise in any area. The *same* circulations could be at the origin of or could constitute the correlation factor[32] among a pandemic happening today, a global financial crisis happening tomorrow, a severe global energy shortage or climate change happening the day after tomorrow. The unforeseeable variability in the type of extremes generated by complexity indicates that, rather than just focusing on medical, financial or engineering approaches to selectively prevent or adapt to extremes of specific types in specific areas, specialists and societies at large should probably better focus on the circulations from where *all* of these extremes might arise.

Resisting systems counterproductivity

Overall, the artificial prostheses by which people are being integrated into systems seem to enable unprecedented levels of creativity and diversification while disabling any conceivable singularity and particularity. Nevertheless, these prostheses constitute systems that ultimately rely on a preexisting and unique underground that reflects the achievement of unprecedented levels of standardization and homogenization. Rather than resulting from pre-

32 Rob Wallace has for example conducted interesting studies on positive correlations between global financial market investments (e.g. in the agribusiness) and flu outbreaks in e.g. Wallace, R. G., 2009. *Breeding Influenza: The Political Virology of Offshore Farming*. Antipode. 2009 Nov; 41(5): 916–951 and in Wallace, R.G., 2016. *Big Farms Make Big Flu. Dispatches on Infectious Disease, Agribusiness, and the Nature of Science*. Monthly Review Press, NY.

existing differences, systems appear as if they are the result of an extremely diffused and socially constructed *sameness* that, contrary to what is happening with instruments, can seem to generate high variability while also appearing very immaterial.

In this text, I have tried to discuss how the socially constructed *sameness* that constitutes the ever more invisible underground which systems rely on produces a situation of permanent contradiction where opposites coincide. This situation might be responsible for the generation of ever more frequent disruptive and unexpected events that put the survival of large portions of the system in peril, representing the hallmark of systems counterproductivity. The question that naturally arises at this point is whether and how the way people relate to other people and to the world out there, whether and how systems artificial prostheses can be resisted and complemented in order to somehow prevent systems counterproductivity.

As I intend to discuss in a further essay, Illich's studies on instrumentality and Agamben's Anthropological machine lead me to hypothesize that the kind of relationality reflected by systems represents the final outcome of a type of relationality that has started prevailing within Western societies only as of modernity. In that essay, I would like to argue that the scholastic notion of *relatio subsistens* that nourishes Illich's concept of gender, as I came to know it through Cayley's latest book, might complement while encompassing systems relationality. I suspect that the former type of relationality which presupposes the existence of *two* irreducible singularities that might (or might not) acknowledge each other through a *third* still represents a safeguard against the ever more extensive and unsustainable processes of homogenization and technological multi-

plication entailed by instruments and systems. Compared with the age when instruments prevailed, the cultivation of this kind of relationality and associated possibilities to limit systems diffusion might nevertheless require markedly different, and as yet, unexplored, ways of thought and being.

An Unlit Candle

by Sajay Samuel

Ivan Illich: an Intellectual Journey is an astonishing book. From the first of over five-hundred pages of text and notes, the writing is limpid, learned without being academic, and engaging because Cayley brings a journalist's discerning eye for detail to his subject. Cayley situates Illich's ideas and books within their political, social, and cultural contexts. For instance, he points out that Illich proposed *Gender* as a heuristic device to radically rethink economics and was rewarded by being canceled by feminist academics who appropriated his term without grasping the concept. Cayley's book is packed with finely crafted sentences that deliver sharp insights. In discussing how Illich's concept of shadow work upends both Marxist and Neoclassical economic sciences, Cayley writes, 'the true universal class is the shadow workers — all those who toil 'unproductively' in the shadow of production' (p.189). A more succinct rebuke of years of misguided economic ideology would be hard to find. Cayley ably connects Illich's thought to a panoply of relevant thinkers from Thomas Aquinas and Nicholas of Cusa to Wendell Berry and Catherine Pickstock and to intellectual currents from existentialism and environmentalism to third world Development and scientism. Embracing Illich's claim that biographies are impossible and indecent, Cayley nevertheless weaves an *intellectual journey* that unites Ivan the man with Illich the thinker. To have pulled off this feat with tasteful discretion is an appropriate gift of a friend to a pilgrim. For all these reasons and the one mentioned next, this book will remain the

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Samuel, S. An Unlit Candle.
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standard guide to Ivan Illich for years to come.

Intellectual Journey is both similar and distinct from Cayley's earlier writings on Illich. His introductions to *Ivan Illich in Conversation and Rivers North of the Future* rehearsed in broad strokes the arc of Illich's life and thought. This book is different not only because of its detailed consideration of the entirety of Illich's *oeuvre*, but also because Cayley concludes it with his incisive interpretation of Illich's thought. George Steiner once remarked that no work can be read without the commentary that prepares the way. When the commentator is David Cayley, it behooves those interested to pay close attention.

Encouraged by Heidegger's claim that 'every thinker thinks only one thought', Cayley proposes 'complementarity' as Illich's one thought (p.451). On the surface such a proposal appears unreasonable. The term complementarity makes its appearance in *Gender* and almost completely sinks out of view after that book. One or two passing references to complementarity occur in later speeches and texts— Cayley points one out when quoting Illich on the 'complementarity between critical and ascetical learning' from his 1989 reflections on *askesis* (p.303). But why should a term that is at the center of only one book be the master key to unlock the entirety of Illich's thought? Cayley anticipates this objection when he says that 'balance, proportion, boundary, limit, nemesis, threshold, and watershed are all terms that denote aspects of this "one thought"' (p.451). It is true that balance, limit, and nemesis are featured in many of Illich's earlier works, such as *Tools for Conviviality* and *Limits to Medicine* among others, while proportion and proportionality are only fleshed out in his 1994 lecture on *The Wisdom of Leopold Kohr* prepared in collaboration with Matthias Rieger. Yet this characterization invites further questions that are not fully dispelled by Cayley's effort to elucidate the relation between complementarity

and these terms (p.451-453). For instance, is proportionality an aspect of complementarity or are these terms synonyms (cf, p.412)? Cayley also anticipates what may seem hair-splitting by admitting that his proposal to treat complementarity as Illich's one thought is provisional (p.464). Accordingly, I follow Cayley's provisional discovery of 'Illich as a philosopher of complementarity' (p.450) to find where it leads.

Cayley presents complementarity as comprising three distinct but related facets. First, complementarity refers to '… the duality or doubleness that constitutes being-in-the-world' (p.450) or '…the condition of the world's existence and each thing [as] defined and sustained by its opposite…' (p.411). Nothing is self-sufficient because everything is constituted by its contrary or opposite— above and below, inside and outside, black and white, front and back. Second, awareness of this double-sided nature of reality entails being aware of the one-sided nature of all knowledge. As Cayley argues at length against the pretensions of Science, this aspect of complementarity requires accepting that complete knowledge of the whole is a human impossibility. Accordingly, awareness that opposites or contradictions constitute being-in-the-world does not dissolve them, except for such mystics as the Rabbi Dov Baer of Mezeritch for whom 'everything is revealed as its opposite' (p.236) and Nicholas of Cusa for whom God appears to us '…as a *coincidentia oppositorum*' (p.438). The third aspect of complementarity refers to the manner of conducting oneself in the awareness of the complementary nature of reality. Cayley says that complementarity not only 'forms the unifying foundation of Illich's work' (p.459) but also informs the way Illich lived. Illich walked the watershed from which the profoundly different and even contradictory opposites that appear nevertheless conjoined are perceived as such. To maintain this stance of the keeping to the middle way — to remain acutely alive to the ineradicable tension between

opposites —demands extraordinary *askesis*. Cayley helpfully notes that Illich's way of life reflected 'a clear understanding that "the kingdom of God" that Jesus preached was to be found *in* the world but that it was not "*of* the world"' (p.450). Doubtless more can be said about Cayley's discussion of complementarity, which I have compressed to almost breaking point. However, I want to pull on one thread of his argument to better grasp two consequences that flow from placing complementarity at the center of Illich's thought.

Cayley holds that because 'any principle pushed to its extreme may turn into its opposite, balance —opposites held together in tension—is therefore the best to which we can aspire' (p.450). This idea is stated repeatedly —'the poise between opposites [i]s an ideal…that could vary in practice from case to case'; 'hypertrophy in one domain will always lead to a loss in the corresponding and complementary sphere' (p.451) — and Cayley emphasizes that 'Illich's underlying worldly ideal was always balance' (p.458). Hence, for Cayley, maintaining opposing principles or contraries in balance without overwhelming either is the key to preserving the accord between all senses of complementarity — as a feature of the world, as a mode of awareness, and as a manner of living.

My first concern is that it is incomplete to speak of a balance between two opposing domains. To make this point I enroll to my cause Louis Dumont, who appears repeatedly in the footnotes of *Gender*. There, Illich refers to Dumont's essays on the Indian caste system and on the contrary principle of individualism that characterizes contemporary Western society. However, I will rely on a different book by Dumont, published after *Gender*, in which he carefully dissects the anthropological literature on Right/Left symbolism, a topic which is at the core of Illich's explication of complementarity in *Gender* (consult pp.70-75 and related footnotes).

In *Essays on Individualism* (1986/83), Dumont rereads the same book edited by Rodney Needham titled *Right and Left: essays on symbolic classification* to which Illich refers. Dumont agrees with the extensive anthropological evidence that all pre-modern peoples grasped 'reality' through a series of binary oppositions or contraries. However, in contrast to Cayley, Dumont insists that it is erroneous to treat opposites as 'a simple "polarity" or "complementarity"', which is to say, as an epistemological issue (p.228). Contraries, argues Dumont, do not have the same status but are always already ranked in relation to each other. The right hand is typically considered superior to the left and the fact they are fit in a ranked relationship becomes obvious when one seeks to reverse the polarities by switching left and right. An example might serve. When a new bride steps into her husband's house in South India, she must do so with her right leg. To step in on her left leg brings ruin to the household even though, as Cayley notes, 'each move we make depends on the opposition of our limbs' (p.480). Though one leg inevitably follows the other and each depends on the other, right and left legs don't have the same effect on the house.

Accordingly, Dumont insists it is mistaken to analyze the R/L opposition as if it were made up of two equal parts: 'as though it displayed at its base a principle of symmetry more generally encountered and, superadded unto it, an asymmetry of direction to which value would be attached' (p.228). Such a bifurcated understanding of R/L symbolism smuggles in the principle of equality on the ground floor and throws from the top floor the ranked character of separate but related elements. Dumont uses the term 'hierarchy' to name this feature of a paired relation, where one of the pair occupies a superior position and is held in higher regard, usually because it encompasses the contrary. There are other modes in which the hierarchical relation between elements can be expressed.

In the case of reversal, as exemplified in the writings of Pope Gelasius, in matters of religion 'the priest is superior to the king…but the priest will obey the king in matters of public order' (p.252). These reversing hierarchical relations between priest and king are themselves grounded in religion occupying a higher rank than politics. In all such cases, the hierarchical element can be discerned only when the related pair is considered with respect to the whole of which it is a part. Accordingly, right and left are symbolically related not because they are simply opposed but, as Dumont says, because 'right and left *do not have the same relationship to the whole of the body*' (emphasis in original, p.228).

Dumont's insistence on recognizing the hierarchical dimension in a paired relation sheds a different light on the balance that Cayley seeks to preserve. Cayley asks to maintain a balance between such heterogeneous domains as walking and being transported, between healing and being medically treated, between learning and being educated (p.451). Such a request presupposes that it is possible to discern when one or the other of the two opposing forces has exceeded its proper domain. However, there is no endogenous principle by which to identify 'when any principle when pushed to its extreme may turn into its opposite' (p.450). A balance between the opposites is not a matter of equalizing them on a weighing scale. Rather, it is a matter of containing what is inferior by what is superior, which in turn requires recognizing the whole with respect to which they are constituted in a hierarchical relation. Walking, healing, and dwelling are superior to their paired opposites precisely because they are related to a third and encompassing element, the body. Stated differently, Dumont points out that mutual limits between two opposed elements require a third element.

Recognizing this hierarchical aspect of distinct yet related elements as integral to 'the complementary nature of

reality', helps to clarify several crucial if underappreciated aspects of *Gender*. I confine myself to the proposition that the gendered pair relate to each other not by themselves but only with respect to the house, which serves as the measure of and matrix for their fit. It is for this reason that Illich discovers the "house", which 'means the roof under which and the place in which the two genders meet: the kitchen, the goods, and the land; the children and the family as a whole, slaves and guests included', and argues that 'material life is created by the home, the main acting subject, through its men and women' (p.117). Those who still recall being born and bred into the house — for example, the Arabic *beit* or the Kerala *tharavadu* — may recognize something of themselves in Illich's claim that premodern and non-Western people are not historical subjects but rather only enact the demands of the house which was the 'ultimate subject of history' (p.118).

My second concern with casting Illich as a 'philosopher of complementarity' flows from the first. Illich posits the human being at the crux of his contrast between the gendered and neutered social pairs (see *Gender* footnotes 4-7, pp.9-15). Men are different from women and united by the house, whereas males and females are different manifestations of the same human being. In what respect are males and females the same? I rely on Dumont's *Essays on Individualism* again to make my point, but in an abridged and analytical way.

Like Illich, Dumont acknowledges the singularity of the 'West', which for him comes into view when contrasted with other cultures. In no other society, says Dumont, has the individual occupied the seat of paramount value or worth. It is important, he notes, to distinguish the two senses in which we mean 'individual': as object and as site of worth. He writes, 'when we speak of man as an individual, we designate two concepts at once… one, the *empirical* subject of speech, thought, and will, the individual sample of mankind, as found

in all societies, and two the independent, autonomous, and thus essentially nonsocial moral being, who carries our paramount values and is found primarily in our modern ideology of man and society' (Dumont, 1986, p.25). Males and females are the different versions of the same human being, which is to say of the individual understood in a non-empirical or metaphysical way.

The existence of nonsocial moral beings *is not* peculiar to the 'West'. Many cultures and peoples have understood the duality of man-in-the-world and individual-outside-the-world. Whereas the former is fully enmeshed in the worldly relationships that define and shape his field of possibilities, the latter is 'one who is after ultimate truth [and] forgoes social life and its constraints to devote himself to his own progress and destiny' (ibid). What *is* peculiar about the 'West' is the figure of 'individual-in-the-world.' Not unlike Illich, Dumont describes how the 'outworldly individual [became] the modern inworldly individual' (p.32) as the long slow result of Church doctrine and Christian history. In particular, he argues that what began with the early church as 'individual-in-relation-to-God' (p.27) ended up, with Calvin, as '*the individual…in the world… [wherein] individualistic value rules without restriction or limitation*' (p.51, emphasis in original). What I focus on here is not the steps of this transformation but rather its consequence, which, according to Dumont, is that 'hierarchical dualism is replaced by a flat continuum governed by an either/or choice' (p.31).

The nonsocial moral being —the individual —discovers itself in relation to the whole. The *outworldly* individual is one mode in which this being can manifest itself. Whether in the desert or under the banyan tree, whether in walled philosophical schools of ancient Greece or secluded Tibetan monasteries, this individual finds itself by renouncing the world and discovering the whole. The ties of kith and kin, of

rules of house and hearth, of laws of community and society now appear as nothing but parochial social conventions. Such individuals may make accommodations with the world but always hold the whole in higher regard than the world.

A second mode for the individual to manifest itself is to be *in the world and not of it*. By all anthropological accounts, this is a mode uniquely announced in the Christian gospels. Dumont names what he considers the core and secret of Christianity as the '*Incarnation of Value*' (p.45, emphasis in original). Illich alludes to this when he says 'the incarnation invites me to seek the face of God in the face of everybody whom I encounter… it makes me believe that there is something in our bodily encounter, which is outside of this world' and that 'our bodiliness takes on a metaphysical quality' (Illich in Cayley 2005, p.110). Though these individuals do not devalue the world or stand apart from it, they do maintain an inner distance from the world even while being plunged in it. Perhaps Illich's description of 'walking the watershed' reported in Cayley (p.236) is as good a description as any of this combination of spiritual distance from the world and physical presence in it. Even if it has, in this second mode, turned towards the world, the individual still maintains the hierarchical dualism or complementarity between the whole and the world. For those walking the watershed, being-in-the-world is judged from the vantage point of being-not-of-it. The candle on the table, the stance of under-standing the one facing you, the openness to surprise, and more, reflect the complementarity between being in and not of the world.

The contemporary individual-in-the-world has been birthed by the community of outworldly Christian individuals. In this form, it offers no place for complementarity. To renounce the flat continuum of being individuals-in-the-world would entail recovering a measure of complementarity. Hierarchical duality, or what Cayley calls 'unity in difference'

(p.411), is the signature of complementarity. It can be expressed in gendered relations, which does not exclude a caste society, or by individuals, whether outworldly, or who are in-the-world-and-not- of-it. Even if he lamented its loss, Illich firmly rejected any return to the gendered society without individuals. As Cayley notes, Illich thought it possible to recover a 'contemporary art of living' (p.243). Wouldn't that require me to light a candle?

"Go and Do Likewise": Reconsidering Luke 10:25-37

by Joey Mokos

Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he said, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" He said to him, "What is written in the law? What do you read there?" He answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." And he said to him, "You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live."

But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. So likewise, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, 'Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.' Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" He said, "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise." Luke 10:25-37 NRSV

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Most of us are familiar with Luke 10:25-37, often referred to as, "The Parable of the Good Samaritan." It was of particular importance to Ivan Illich who often referred to this parable to make a point about the surprising nature of love, the inner turning of our guts that precedes mercy, and the radical redefinition of the neighbor that ignores religious, ethnic and tribal limits. According to the index in *Ivan Illich: An Intellectual Journey*, Cayley cites this passage seven times, sometimes in lengthy passages. Cayley correctly states, "Illich claimed this parable had been persistently misunderstood as a story about how one *ought* to act." (p. 351)

About a year before Ivan was born into eternal life, Wes Avram, Ivan, and I had a conversation about rethinking this parable. Wes, a rhetorician, and Presbyterian minister was tripped up by the rhetorical leap made in focusing on the action of the Samaritan. Wes and I argued that this may very well be a story about how one ought to 'act' if the model of 'behavior' was the man in the ditch. In fact, a careful examination of the passage shows that the lawyer is asked to identify not with the Samaritan, but rather with the beaten-up man in the ditch. In so doing, Jesus is inducing the lawyer into a new way of thinking and acting. Ivan was delighted and encouraged us to continue this line of thinking.

Later that same weekend, I went on to discuss with Ivan the potential for looking at his body of work as an exercise in theological anthropology, that is as an exercise in describing who we are and what gifts and talents we have as creatures of God. Ivan's response in the moment was, "I never thought of it that way." But he immediately went on to suggest we start working together to tease this out. The conversation continued that day, but we never had the opportunity to go as in depth as either of us would have liked. I have been living with this conversation for over two decades trying to make sense of the implications. It was profoundly significant at the

time and has only grown as an interpretive lens for reading Illich and thinking about how to live well.

One of the challenges of sharing what Illich can teach, is that people wonder what exactly to do with his description of the state of the world. A centerpiece of Illich's work in the 1970's was a description of how our institutions and tools become counterproductive. Illich describes the very place many readers look to solve problems in the world as making the problem worse. This can feel hopeless, yet Illich maintains a profound hope in the ability for a group of friends to forge new ways of living well despite collapsing or entrapping institutions. Readers sense that Illich perhaps holds different assumptions about who we are as created beings. I would argue that these "different assumptions" are anthropological assumptions, of which three are important.

The most important of his anthropological assumptions is the high regard in which he held human capability that found its source in his reading of the story of creation in Genesis. Illich finds significant meaning in the description of human beings having been created in the image of God. One of the implications of this in theological circles is that humans are therefore co-creators with God, although, Illich never addresses this point directly. Illich believed that human actions are rooted in their understanding of the world, and their imaginations are shaped by the tools and ideas they have about the world. But it is easy to lose sight of the fact that this understanding was created. To feel secure, human beings internalize the worlds they create to the point that they no longer see those worlds as something *they* did. Instead, people begin to see the structure of social relations as "self-evident" – rather than a human act of creation that can be revised and renewed, this understanding of the world suddenly becomes something external to human beings which now has the power to act upon them. For Illich, this is a distortion. It is a lack

of awareness of the nature of human beings as image-bearers of God. Illich did not believe human beings were born into "original stupidity" that needed the grace of curriculum to remedy, but rather that human beings are born with natural abilities and gifts by virtue of their creation. This noble view of the human being is a central component of Illich's theological anthropology.

But, for Illich, this elevated regard of human capability was also inherently limited. People are dependent on one's neighbors and friends because human beings were created to be in community. This is a second central assumption of his theological anthropology and infuses much of his work. For example, focusing on our capabilities—our gifts—without attending to our limits and our dependence on others, tips the multiple balances described in *Tools for Conviviality* towards a destructive path. One of the purposes of his argument in *Tools* was to restore human control over tools as a collective mutually dependent practice. It is the awareness of this interdependence that is the starting place for regaining balance. Illich's anthropological assumption that human beings are created for one another and that living with one another well is part of what it is to be image-bearers of God, requires this awareness and embrace of our mutual dependence.

Finally, the third assumption of Illich's theological anthropology is his view that the radical freedom to act is a central component of what it is to be human. This freedom was part of the creation of human beings in the image of God, but its realization in human life was restricted with the introduction of sin into the world. Part of human nature is our capacity to learn and grow through imitation and practice… however, our models for imitation became increasingly rigid and limited. Our desire to avoid suffering and death increasingly restricted our ability to suffer well and live well together. Institutionalizing the attempt to avoid suffering and

death has sent us over the second threshold as described in *Tools for Conviviality*, beyond which further action becomes counterproductive. The loss of freedom to love is one of the most tragic results of this sin and makes more important what was accomplished in the Incarnation. Jesus—the divine made flesh—made this radical freedom available to humanity once again. Jesus offered a new a model to emulate, a model of compassion and spontaneity. Jesus' coming into the world simultaneously freed us from the bonds of sin but also introduced new possibilities of sin, reasserting the freedom to choose our neighbor but potentially locking us into a condition in which everyone *is* our neighbor.

Luke 10:25-37 is an example of these dynamics at work. Illich's reading of the story focused on the example of the Samaritan and emphasized what is possible when the radical freedom to love is lived out. But as both Cayley and Illich assert, this freedom to love has been perverted by turning it into an ethical imperative. Freedom is thereby distorted into compulsion. The question is if it is possible to read this passage differently to preserve Illich's insight while avoiding its distortive consequences? I believe reading the story using the lens of these three anthropological assumptions of Illich provides just such a possibility.

The passage begins with a lawyer testing Jesus by asking him what the lawyer should do to inherit eternal life. With his question, the lawyer is not out to win a case or an argument but is testing Jesus to see what he knows. In the world of this text, ancient Jewish lawyers were interpreters and teachers of Torah. While they may have been called to resolve real world problems, unlike our modern-day lawyers who are pitted against each other in an adversarial legal system, it was the knowledge of Torah that gave ancient Jewish lawyers a position of prestige and power within the community. When Jesus seems to easily get to the heart of the law-

yer's question about what the law says about how to inherit eternal life including loving your neighbor as yourself, the lawyer feels the need to test him further. He presses Jesus by asking, "And who is *my* neighbor?" (emphasis mine). It is to this question that to Jesus replies with this familiar parable about a man going from Jerusalem to Jericho who encounters robbers who take everything from the man, beat him, strip him, and leave him for dead in a ditch by the road. Three people come down the road in succession: a priest, a Levite, and a Samaritan. Only the Samaritan stops and helps the man in the ditch, moved to pity (literally "a turning of the guts"). Jesus then ends by asking a question of the lawyer, "Which of these three men, do you think, *was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers*?" (emphasis mine) The lawyer says, "The one who showed him mercy." It is almost as if the lawyer could not even bring himself to say, 'the Samaritan.'

It is important to note that the lawyer, who is Jewish, is having a conversation with Jesus, who is Jewish. Ethnic identity within a defined group imposes rules for how to act: 'We Jews do 'x', we do not do 'y". Group identity was, therefore, built over and against other groups. This is certainly true in the case of Jews and Samaritans in first century Palestine. These two groups were enemies who lived in the same geography. Understanding that this religio-ethnic tension existed is crucial to the context of the parable and the ability of the parable to transcend its original context to impact our own. Sometimes Illich would substitute 'Palestinian' for 'Samaritan' to make this point.

"Go and do likewise."

Religio-ethnic tension animates Luke 10:25-37. The power of the story resides in the fact that a Jew is identifying the Samaritan as his neighbor. It is the hinge on which the story turns. However, what is often overlooked is the fact that

in responding to the question, "Who is *my* neighbor?" with the answer of "the Samaritan," the lawyer is identifying himself with the man in the ditch. The Jewish lawyer, a person in a position of power, must lower himself to recognize his enemy as the one with the power to aid him. This is an inversion both of power and of ethnic norms. Illich focused on this act of the Samaritan as an example of the freedom offered by Jesus to choose one's neighbor. This freedom to choose is corrupted when we turn it into an expectation to act a certain way. I would suggest that Illich's theological anthropology invites us to consider new questions in the light of how the parable ends, when Jesus commands the lawyer, "Go and do likewise". The questions become, do what? Who is the model? What is the relationship between the Samaritan and the man in the ditch?

The Greek is *Poreuou kai sy poiei homoiōs* – literally, 'go and you do likewise' or 'go and do the same.' Traditionally, this has been interpreted as referring to the action of the Samaritan. To do likewise, as the Samaritan, is understood as an injunction to aid the needy, as a recommendation to act mercifully towards the weak and downtrodden. Acting like the Samaritan fits with Jesus' message to lift the poor and needy, found throughout the gospels. This reading seems to follow the force of the narrative, and from the time of early Christianity, is the most common interpretation. Illich also focused on the Samaritan but, for him, it was not the merciful action of the Samaritan that lay at the heart of the parable. Instead, for Illich, it was the radical freedom the Samaritan demonstrated by crossing ethnic boundaries because he was moved by something inexplicable, that constituted the radical core of the parable and the true anthropological model.

Illich understood that when people focused specifically on the merciful action of the Samaritan as the model, it evolved into a moral imperative… ultimately leading to the

creation of social service agencies, hospitals, and, paradoxically, 'Good Samaritan' laws which protect anyone acting as the Samaritan from legal prosecution. For Illich, this unbidden compassion turned into compulsion is a corruption of the original message. It removes the central anthropological message of the story—that Jesus has opened the way back to the radical freedom human beings were created for as image-bearers of God—and instead leads to destructive results.

In my work as a Union Benefit Administrator, I've witnessed many such results. I recall a particularly awful case in which a man underwent surgery to fix his heart. Unfortunately, he had a stroke during the surgery and was put on a ventilator to assist his breathing. Within a few days it was clear he was 'brain dead' and unable to breath on his own. The family were hopeful of his recovery and the doctors obliged by continuing to offer different services. None of the interventions helped, and in fact may have made his situation worse. He was non-communicative and slowly lost weight, faced organ failures for which doctors hooked up additional machines. Ultimately, he developed bed sores that become infected, of which he finally died. He became a million-dollar medical case in which each intervention diminished his condition by simultaneously preventing his death while pushing him closer to it. This prolonged his suffering and his family and the workers who contribute to the fund still carry the medical debt. This is born out of the hubris and compulsion to act.

Illich attempted to rescue us from scenarios like this one by focusing on the freedom to choose the neighbor. Following the path laid out by Illich and further delineated by Cayley, I suggest their reading can be bolstered by a reading focused on the man in the ditch.

The Man in the Ditch as a Model of Dependence:

An alternative reading suggests we recognize that the parable is narratively embedded in a conversation between Jesus and the lawyer. Jesus shares the parable, principally, for the lawyer's benefit. Remembering Illich's belief in the communal nature of human beings helps us to see that the parable is situated in the human encounter between these two men—face to face. When the parable ends Jesus asks the lawyer: "Which of these three proved (or became) the neighbor to the man in the ditch?" They are still in conversation. The lawyer hesitantly answers, "The one who showed mercy."

Within the narrative context, it is the lawyer's recognition of the Samaritan as neighbor to the man in the ditch that constitutes the radical step. Jesus is leading the lawyer to take the same step of radical freedom that the Samaritan made—he is asking him to be a co-creator with God of a new world where a Jewish lawyer can recognize the Samaritan as his neighbor. But the lawyer cannot grasp what Jesus is offering while remaining mired in his position of power as a lawyer or as a person able to rescue the man in the ditch. To enter the radical freedom that Jesus offers, and the Samaritan embodies without distorting that freedom, the lawyer must first recognize his own weakness and dependence, the second of Illich's anthropological assumptions. Therefore, the accent of the parable can fall on the question Jesus asks at its conclusion which requires the lawyer to look at the situation from the perspective of the man in the ditch to give an answer. He must *become* the beaten up and broken man to see the Samaritan as his neighbor.

In this way, Jesus walks the lawyer through this difficult exercise of giving up the rigid rules of his reading of Torah and allow himself to hear the surprising call to mercy and compassion. When Jesus then commands "Go and do likewise," we can hear in this command the same belief in the

autonomous capability of human beings that Illich had. According to the alternative reading I've offered, this command enjoins the lawyer to recognize his vulnerability and dependence in likeness with the man in the ditch and to see mercy coming from surprising people and places. It is only from this position of dependence that the lawyer can go into the world with the radical freedom gifted to a human being and not use that freedom to distort and harm. Illich's insistence on the awareness of and living in mutual dependence as the way to pull human beings back from the second threshold follows the pattern that Jesus sets out, a pattern that will enable the lawyer to respond to the original question "what must I do to inherit eternal life." When Jesus says, "Go and do likewise" he is saying to the lawyer, 'Recognize your place of dependence in the ditch and practice relying on mercy and compassion to guide you.'

This reading is explicitly not about how to act but about recognizing our orientation toward God and other people. "Doing likewise," means recognizing our condition of vulnerability and dependence and acknowledging that God's mercy comes from surprising places. Further examinations of Luke confirm that the passage focuses more on self-lowering and receiving mercy rather than on acting. Immediately following this passage, we encounter the familiar story about Martha and Mary in Luke 10:38-42 where Jesus makes this point even stronger.

> Now as they went on their way, he entered a certain village, where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to what he was saying. But Martha was distracted by her many tasks; so, she came to him and asked, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me." But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha,

> you are worried and distracted by many things; there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her." Luke 10:38-42 NRSV

Mary chooses her place, literally lowering herself to sit at Jesus' feet. She chose to sit and listen to Jesus. Martha, on the other hand, was busying herself with all the tasks of hosting her guests. When Martha complains to Jesus, he praises Mary for having chosen the path of self-lowering and listening rather than the path of action.

The larger context of the gospel's audience offers further evidence that Luke was trying to disrupt status expectations and help his audience recognize mercy and compassion coming from surprising sources. The audience for the gospel is mixed with both Jewish and non-Jewish people, as evidenced by the frequent explanations of Jewish customs and words. Given that at least part of the intended audience is gentile, it is interesting to note that this parable of the beaten-up man in the ditch only appears in Luke. Of all the stories Luke could have chosen to include in this gospel, why did he include this one? I believe a partial answer to this question is that it fit his rhetorical needs. He must find a way to offer the good news of the incarnate Jewish God to non-Jews. The mercy and blessings offered by this Jewish God can be surprising as it crosses ethic lines and social boundaries. The message to the audience is that God loves you and is merciful to you, and if you recognize and act based on your dependence on God and on one another, you too can receive this blessing. Perhaps the message to gentiles is also a suggestion that they could be like the Samaritan and offer mercy to the Jews (or whoever becomes the neighbor). However, this must be balanced by recognizing that Jesus rhetorically removes the power the lawyer assumes he has because of his prestigious position.

The answer to the lawyer's question is simple if the lawyer assumes the condition of being in the ditch. It is easy to love the neighbor that just saved you. Jesus' message to love the neighbor is rooted in recognizing mutual dependence. Luke's audience is asked to recognize this same point regarding their Jewish neighbors.

Implications of being the beaten-up man in the ditch:

Reading Luke 10:25-37 with a focus on the beaten-up man in the ditch does not lend itself to the compulsion to love. It does not lead to naming laws, hospitals, or social service organizations after the Samaritan. It is about orienting toward surprise, gratitude, and our dependence on the mercy of others. It is recognizing our vulnerability and need for others. It cuts against individualism and asks us to see ourselves completely dependent on some surprising step taken by an unexpected passerby. It may not seem like comfort, but when I find myself feeling desperate or uncertain what I should do, this is a reminder to stop and ask for help. In these situations, help always comes from surprising places… if the traditional sources of support worked, I would not feel desperate.

If we focus on the action of the Samaritan, we find the one doing mercy, who is motivated by a churning in his gut that moves him to pity. It is as if a movement of the spirit causes him to lose control of his faculties, and he breaks convention to assist his historical enemy. Moral theology and philosophy often focus on how we should act, but perhaps we must begin with an examination of how we observe what is around us. Illich holds a high view of created beings, we are capable of greatness. However, this same gift can be overplayed and become destructive, hence the need for self-imposed limits. This is not unlike medicine that at the wrong dose becomes poison.

The reading of the beaten-up man in the ditch sug-

gests we should find the right orientation vis-à-vis God and neighbor – as being dependent on them. This should be held in tension with the Samaritan as the one doing mercy. To the extent we see the Samaritan as a model for action, it is worth considering that his action was spontaneous. He provided what seems to be just the right help for the situation, and it is possible that he knew the right thing to do because of his experience needing help himself at times. Sometimes we are the man in the ditch, sometimes we are the Samaritan, but in both places, we are called to recognize our dependence on others and let mercy and compassion guide us before social norms that block our recognition of our shared existence as creatures of God.

I recently read James Alison's Jesus the Forgiving Victim: Listening for the Unheard Voice with some people and we came across a story about a victim of bullying named Fernando. In the story, Fernando is a 'fairy', a feminine gay man who can't pass as straight. He becomes the target of bullying and eventually leaves the school. However, after some time away he returns to the school with more power, clout, and status than he had while he was at school. His father had ascended in the ranks of the government or in some other way his family grew in stature. The story is about how people feel when they see Fernando returning. Some of them fear Fernando coming to exact revenge. Alison then plays out different scenarios, but in one of them he suggests that Fernando comes back and forgives his bullies and still wants to play with them… only he wants to try to play a different game not rooted in rivalry and targeting of anyone —he hopes for a cooperative game. Given the title of the book, you may have already guessed that this is a story about Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. One of the people in our reading group was very disturbed by this because it suggested too much burden on the victim to make everything better. However, we dug into

the story and noticed that while Fernando was in the thick of being bullied, his only job was to survive. His choice about how to respond differently was only made possible by leaving and coming back with more power. In fact, he had stopped being the immediate target of bullying. His choice was only possible once the power dynamic changed. My friend identified with Fernando as a victim, but not with Fernando in a position of power. The opposite happens with reading Luke 10:25-37 – people identify with the position of power, and not with the victim. In both cases, the issue revolves around the question, "How should I act?"

Illich was not interested answering that question. In fact, he thought it ludicrous to try and answer that for anyone other than himself, and perhaps in support of a friend. Illich did not argue for a course of action in his pamphlets but for an orientation – a celebration of awareness as one of his essays was titled. He believed that people would come up with appropriate solutions in loving relationships. What one group of friends come up with will not be the same as other groups or be appropriate for them. This begs a question of scale. How large of a group can come together and act before they cease to recognize the unique situation the members find themselves in?

Without going too far down this rabbit hole, the point is that Illich had a radical trust in people to subsist and live convivially. This is only limited by how we encroach on other people's ability to do the same. The key to recognizing this begins with recognizing our dependence on the mercy of God and other creatures. Schooling, Medical systems, economics impose a moral imperative that interferes with our ability to recognize the hubris that suggests we are independent and do not need a neighbor. Hubris takes another form when we assume the position of power and in so doing assume the other person is in the ditch and in need of our assistance (a future

paper could look at 'diagnosis' in this context). It creates the basis for thinking we can solve problems for other people or impose systemic solutions to avoid ditches. This runs the risk of focusing too much on our own power to act rather than our mutual dependence and shared humanity. The dilemma we face is finding the balance between acting and awareness. Our solution to this is critical to pull back from the second threshold. I am certain I cannot answer this on my own, and that different groups of friends will come up with different answers unique to their situation. But I would suggest we would do well to recognize our place in the ditch — a place from which it is easier to recognize our neighbors and to accept the gratuity of their mercy.

Ivan Illich: An Intellectual Journey

by Wolfgang Palaver

David Cayley conducted two long interviews for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation with Ivan Illich (1926–2002), a Catholic priest, social critic, and historian. Both these interviews were also published as books. The first came out in 1992 with the title *In Conversation*, the second in 2005 as The Rivers North of the Future (reviewed in the May, 2007, *Bulletin*) that Cayley rightly calls Illich's testament. Over those many years Cayley and Illich became friends, and it is due to this friendship that the Canadian journalist and writer has now published a comprehensive book about Illich's intellectual journey. This book not only covers the development of Illich's work and thinking but also shows which thinkers and theories influenced him, and helps us understand some of his asides by connecting them to authors and works that point in a similar direction. All the major stages and topics are very well presented and explained in this volume. This book will be a must for all who want to understand Illich more closely.

Let me refer to some of the most important insights of Illich. First, I mention his critique of institutions that so easily become counterproductive if their limits are not carefully observed. The most outstanding example in this regard can be found in his famous book *Deschooling Society* (1971) that questions compulsory education. Are schools really contributing to learning and the development of one's personality or are they primarily entry tickets into a world of social privileges? Illich frequently illustrates how institutions that are an offspring of good intentions easily cause counterproductive

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consequences. Cayley warns his readers, however, not to see in Illich someone who rejects institutions per se but makes them aware how often they fail to achieve their promises. This critique of institutions led Illich to a deeper understanding of modernity that he sees as the perversion of the Christian revelation. He recognized that institutional developments inside the Catholic Church turned into the modern state: "When Gregory VII proclaimed that he alone was 'permitted to make new laws according to the needs of the times' and Boniface VIII followed by claiming that law originates 'in the bosom of the Pope,' they made themselves the source of a new idea of sovereignty" (380). Illich's most famous Latin formula *corruptio optimi quae est pessima* [the corruption of the best is the worst] summarizes his recognition of how good intentions can turn out badly. Illich's most famous biblical example in this regard is the New Testament parable of the Samaritan which shows how ethnic boundaries are overcome by a compassion that no longer limits its outreach according to traditional religious, cultural or ethnic boundaries. In this regard this parable represents the best of the Christian revelation. But it becomes the worst if it turns into a rule that dissolves all home-worlds and undermines local capabilities to help those who are in need. Illich referred also to this parable to explain that its spirit of love cannot be institutionalized without perverting it. The Samaritan acts out of a freedom of love that would be lost if it becomes an institutional obligation. "Freedom institutionalized is something quite different from a resumption of the culturally shaped obligations that the Samaritan has transcended. The Gospel brought under the power of the world is not like anything that has existed before. *Corruptio optimi pessima*" (358).

In view of today's main challenges Illich's critical philosophy of technology is most important. For this he turns to

the medieval ages and especially to Hugh of St. Victor—one of his favorite authors—to illuminate the difference between an age of tools and our age of systems. Modernity lost the distance that is necessary to see technologies as means toward ends. Without distance humans become slaves of their own products and are no longer able to set limits to technologies. Illich's turn to Hugh of St. Victor does not mean that he thinks that we can return to the past. His looking back tries to discover roads not taken in order to respond to the challenges of today. His philosophy of technology recommends a Christian *askesis* that he defines as "the acquisition of the habits that foster contemplation" or "conversion to God's human face" (418). Such an askesis could provide an attitude that helps to set limits and knows what is enough.

Readers of this *Bulletin* are probably not so much interested in the work of Illich as such but how it relates to Girard's mimetic theory. Cayley is able to show us connections between these two thinkers because he not only interviewed Illich several times but also broadcasted an excellent five-hour interview series with René Girard. Unfortunately, there are only a very few explicit references to Girard in this book on Illich. He sees in Girard a companion of Illich in their recognition that today Christianity is criticized with the help of Christian insights. They also share an interest in the apocalyptic stage of our times and in their interpretation of the Antichrist.There is, however, a close affinity with mimetic theory in Illich's work that is not explicitly mentioned. Illich frequently addressed scarcity as the modern predicament, the "anchoring myth of modernity" (18). Contrary to Marx, Illich views the modern creation of scarcity as the source of alienation and also as the root of our economic and ecological problems. Cayley summarizes the modern myth of scarcity in the following way: "Scarcity, as a postulate, produces plenty

by assuming its opposite. Behind our backs, so to speak, it turns the base metal of envy, desire, and mutual indifference into the gold of abundance and social peace" (186). These promises do not become true. The release of envy does not create harmony but incites competition and resentment. It is not by chance that Illich comes so close to Girard in this regard. He was influenced by *L'enfer des choses*, the book by Paul Dumouchel and Jean-Pierre Dupuy—an early collaborator of Illich—that applied Girard's mimetic theory to the field of critical economics already in 1979. Illich refers in *Shadow Work* (1980) as well as in *Gender* (1982) to the book of Dumouchel and Dupuy. Both these books document Illich's wish to write a history of scarcity. Unfortunately, he could not finish this project. One of the reasons for this was the harsh criticism that his book *Gender* received from feminists. Cayley's book tries to convince his readers that Illich's reflections were misunderstood. Cayley claims that by writing his book he discovered Illich as a "philosopher of complementarity" (450). Complementarity is also at the center of Illich's view of gender because he realized that "vernacular cultures"—a term frequently used by Illich—saw women and men complementing each other to contain envy, competition, and resentment. This is in tension, of course, with the modern emphasis on the equality between women and men. Illich, however, is not against equality as such but distinguishes between different types of it depending on their destructiveness:

> "Illich speaks loudly against equality as sameness. But he also speaks loudly for equality in its sense of equity, arguing that most women suffer irremediable disadvantages in a realm of universal circulation and competition. The two points are connected. Illich claims that idealizing equality may allow some women to rise to new heights of wealth and influence but that it will hurt many more – by lower-

> ing the status of every form of sustenance that occurs outside the cash nexus in which equality finds its measure, by fostering an illusory sense of opportunity, and by inviting those who fail to seize these imaginary opportunities to blame themselves. His analysis of feminism, in this respect, took the same form as his analysis of every other modern institution that he explored—it incites envy and delivers frustration. Only by reversing economic growth, unbuilding the global megalith, and restoring the human scale will the majority of women regain their dignity, he says, because only then will the contribution of those who have been shunted aside in the rat race begin to matter. This is the sole sense in which Illich speaks against equality: equality-as-justice, he says, cannot be achieved without a firm rejection of equality-as-sameness." (239-240)

Illich's book was rejected in the early 1980s. I am not sure if Cayley will succeed in his attempt to rehabilitate Illich's reflections on gender because the problem is difficult to solve. The traditional submission of women went along with the vernacular complementarity. How can we preserve the advantages of complementarity without a hierarchical relation between men and women? The whole problem finds an interesting parallel in Gandhi's dealing with the Indian caste system. This parallel is not by chance because as Cayley rightly claims there are "many affinities" between Gandhi and Illich (87). Gandhi recognized in the traditional Vedic division of society into four classes (*varnas*) a bulwark against the dangers of envious comparisons. He wanted to avoid "all unworthy competition" and did not identify the *varnas* with the caste system because he strongly insisted on the equality of all human beings: "Assumption of superiority by any person over any other is a sin against God and man. Thus caste, in so far as it connotes distinctions in status, is an evil." There remains

an ongoing discussion about Gandhi's attempt to support the traditional *varnas* without hierarchical caste relations. Illich's view of gender faces a similar dilemma. It is definitely important to understand the value of vernacular attempts to contain envious competition. Our modern world will definitely benefit from investigating these traditional means against destructive envy. These means, however, are no longer able to solve our own struggles with competition. We have to deal with it in a world of equality that requires new ways to respond to the challenges of mimetic desire.

There is one topic in Illich's work that I find disturbing and that became even more so during the pandemic if we see how the Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben—the editor of Illich's works in Italian—and David Cayley himself reflected on the Covid-19 crisis. Illich was very critical of the modern emphasis on life. The title of the respective chapter in Cayley's book, "To Hell with Life," quotes a provocative thesis by Illich who criticized a modern idolatry of life. Illich was certainly right that "those who hope to gain immortality as cyborgs or who have had themselves cryogenically preserved in anticipation of later medical resurrection" are fetishizing life (327). But can Illich's "theology of death" provide a proper orientation? I strongly doubt it. I see two nearly incompatible claims in Illich's approach to life and death. On the one hand he seems so occupied with death as the giver of "meaning to life" that he sounds like a representative of the sacred of early religions before the biblical religions emphasized the holiness of life (314-315). On the other hand, he represents a very modern accent on freedom by claiming that it is of utmost importance that people have "the possibility of actively dying their own death" (319). The second claim is expressed in a letter to Benedictine nuns in which he deals with excesses of life-prolongation that put many people in a state of "undead"

(324).

Again, Illich highlights with his intervention the counterproductivity of good intentions. He comes, however, close to endorsing euthanasia (but without using this term) in his claim that death has to be a "personal act" (322). Illich frequently questions the modern demand to control every aspect of life and there are very good reasons for doing that. To insist, however, that dying must be an active personal act comes very close to keeping death—one of the "existential uncontrollabilities of life" (Hartmut Rosa)—under control. Cayley's comment helps to put this letter in perspective because Illich does not come up with it as a general rule for responding to this modern challenge but expresses mainly his spirit of friendship that he prefers to modern technological care.

Cayley claims that "Illich's theology of death was entirely orthodox and deeply rooted in biblical and patristic sources" (319). Illich is close to a theology of death that we can find in religious traditions still today. But is he really representing a biblical perspective? Is not the Hebrew Bible a manifestation of a "God of the living" as Jesus himself maintained (Mt 22:32)? The writer Eli Wiesel summarizes in his book *Open Heart* the Jewish perspective in the following way: "We sanctify life, not death. […] Of course, we must accept the idea—the reality—that every man is mortal. But Jewish law teaches us that death is not meant to guide us; it is life that will show us the way." Reflecting on the *Akeda* he criticized a sacrificial type of Christianity that sees in the threatened Isaac a prefiguration of Jesus' crucifixion and concluded that "for the Jew, all truth must spring from life, never from death" (*Messengers of God* 1977, 90). Girard justly opposed Wiesel for this portrayal of Christianity because his Christian understanding of sacrifice does not deviate from the Jewish emphasis on the holiness of life. Girard calls death in *Violence*

and the Sacred "the worst form of violence" (32). In *Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World* he deconstructs the worship of death that characterizes so many (early) religions by showing how the scapegoat mechanism turns the death of the victim into a spring of life. The violent sacred causes people to view death "as if it were productive of life", a view that Girard recognizes as idolatry: "death is once again covertly deified" (82). It is along this line of thinking that Girard prefers the Judgement of Solomon in the Hebrew Bible to Sophocles' *Antigone*. Whereas Antigone dies for her dead brother the good harlot risks her life for the living child. "The Gospels clearly define what makes the tragic text somewhat inferior to the biblical texts when they say: *Leave the dead to bury their dead*." (*Things*, 245; quoting Mt 8:22). Cayley refers to this provocative saying of Jesus but does not relate it to Illich's reflections on death (36). Illich's theology of death misses the crucial difference between the tragic and the biblical text.

This becomes especially visible in Agamben's application of Illich's view of death, which resulted in a harsh critique of the Catholic Church and Pope Francis for agreeing to measures taken against the spread of Covid-19. Agamben refers to Illich in his claim that "from Antigone to today" it had never happened before that "cadavers should be burned without a funeral […] solely in the name of a *risk*". Today we know that so far the virus has killed more than five million people. Even when Agamben wrote this text in April 2020, Italy had already been severely hit by the pandemic. From the perspective of the holiness of life it makes sense to protect living people from being infected by the virus. It remains a sacrificial attitude to prefer funeral rites to the health and safety of living people. I think that we have to move beyond Illich's theology of death by aiming for a theology of life that does not neglect the reality

of death but believes in the God of life who will finally destroy death, who is "the last enemy" (1 Cor 15:26). Illich rejected views that see death as an enemy. This is again an attitude that is closer to tragic thinking than to the biblical spirit. His theology of death was more concerned with the *ars moriendi*—the art of dying—than with resurrection. Dietrich Bonhoeffer—Cayley mentions many affinities between the Protestant theologian and Illich—was very clear about the difference between the art of dying and faith in the resurrection: "We're more concerned to get over the act of dying than to overcome death. Socrates mastered the art of dying; Christ overcame death as 'the last enemy' (I Cor. 15.26). There is a real difference between the two things; the one is within the scope of human possibilities, the other means resurrection. It's not from *ars moriendi*, the art of dying, but from the resurrection of Christ, that a new and purifying wind can blow through our present world" (*Letters and Papers from Prison*). I am not sure how Illich would have responded to this insight of Bonhoeffer's. It could be that he would have agreed because his work is not a systematic theology but the result of his many engagements with challenges our modern world has faced. He responded to a world that is out of balance in a necessarily unbalanced way. David Cayley frequently stresses in his book that Illich was "a proscriptive rather than a prescriptive thinker". This is an important qualification that should never get out of sight if one reads Illich's work. His emphasis on the counterproductivity of good intentions remains a valid warning for our times. It would, however, be very dangerous to turn these warnings into prescriptions. Agamben's essays on the pandemic succumb to this mistake and hurt the legacy of Illich. David Cayley partly fell into the same trap in his blogs on the Covid-19 crisis. His book about Illich, however, will remain a highly valuable guide to this important work.

DAVID CAYLEY RESPONDS…

by David Cayley

First of all my thanks to my seven reviewers for their careful readings, and often extravagant praise. Words like "masterful," "invaluable," "astonishing," and – my favourite – "limpid" sound sweetly in a writer's ear and reward the many years of work that went into this book.

Some of these essays use the book as a starting point for further reflection – and so require little comment from me – while others engage critically with ideas in the book – and so require a more extensive answer – but I will try, in what follows, to say what I have gleaned from each one.

Robert Kugelmann takes as his starting point Illich's remark that reading Aquinas with Jacques Maritain in Rome in the late 1940's laid the foundation of his "entire perceptual mode." With sure-footed awareness that Illich was talking about a way of thinking, and not *Thomist* ideology, Kugelmann then revisits some of Maritain's writings in order to understand what Illich meant. I found this reading very rich particularly with regard to the crucial terms *subsistence* and *person* and to the link between them. Illich defended subsistence and, at one point, even defined modernity as a 500-year "war on subsistence," but he was often misunderstood by people who took subsistence to mean a bare living scraped from scarce resources. Francine Duplessix Gray even went so far as to cast him as a romantic with "the aristocrat's sentimental attraction…for cultures of poverty untainted by bourgeois aspiration." Kugelmann's reading makes clear that, for Illich, the word's primary reference is to independence and wholeness and that, when he speaks of subsistence as an economic

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Cayley, D. David Cayley responds…
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style, it is to these attributes that he is referring. The case is the same with *person*. In Illich's seminal and still, as we shall see, scandalous lecture on *life* as an "institutional fetish" the key contrast is between the amorphous and unbounded condition of "a life" and the definite reality of a person, the category in which Western humanism had once been "anchored" according to Illich. But the word, again, was not well understood. Kugelmann, quoting Maritain, makes clear that "a person is a spiritual totality characterized by independence" – the link to subsistence – and that this wholeness is rooted at once in our relatedness to one another and in the image of God in which we were created. "This understanding of what it means to be a person" Kugelmann says, "underlies all of Illich's analysis of the modern age." I think this is exactly right.

An interesting sidelight on Kugelmann's paper is his introduction towards the end of an essay by Emmanuel Levinas in which the French philosopher reflects on Russian cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin's having encircled the earth in his spacecraft in 1961 and thus become the first person ever to see the earth from outside its atmosphere. Levinas takes the occasion to interrogate his teacher and nemesis Martin Heidegger and what he calls Heidegger's "superstitions surrounding Place." Yes, Levinas says, Gagarin's view might be just be the consummate "enframing" of nature by technology, but mightn't it also be a liberation from parochialism and our suffocating enclosure by Place? Kugelmann introduces the point as a *sed contra* – the "but on the other hand" which is a feature of Aquinas' formal dialectic. Might this objection also be applied to Illich, Kugelmann wonders. He then goes on to answer the objection, but what interested me was that Illich made a very similar point himself in a lecture he gave to a teach-in in Toronto in 1970, of which I was one of the organizers. This was back in the time when images of the whole earth photographed from space were just beginning to appear

and Whole Earth Catalogue founder Stewart Brand could believe that the sight of "the earth complete, tiny [and] adrift" would irrevocably alter popular consciousness. In his lecture Illich claimed that this image could be read in two ways: as a call to repentance or as an invitation to management. We know which road was taken, but it's interesting that Illich, like Levinas, also saw the positive aspect of the view from space.

Joey Mokos's "Go and Do Likewise" rereads the parable of the Samaritan from the perspective of the wounded one to whom the Samaritan ministers. Illich took this story as being about freedom to love beyond all restrictive categories, and objected to the standard account of it as a story illustrating a rule of conduct. Mokos supplements this interpretation by suggesting that we take the man who receives help from a completely unexpected quarter as the "protagonist" of the parable. The story can then be seen as emphasizing vulnerability, dependence, and helplessness even to discern where help might come from, as well as being about the Samaritan's power to act on the stirring he feels in the face of the man's plight. Mokos roots this reading in what he calls Illich's "theological anthropology" – his fundamental assumptions about what human beings are. These are, to paraphrase Mokos: that, being made in the image of God, we have the capacity to "co-create" the world; that, being communal creatures, we can only do this in relationship; and, finally, that we are free and can only fulfill this freedom spontaneously and responsively, rather than by prescription. I think Mokos is right that these *are* Illich's assumptions, and I think he is also right to direct attention to the helpless one in the story as a corrective against what he calls "the compulsion to act." Exclusive focus on the Samaritan, even if his freedom is acknowledged, still evokes the temptation to "save" which has been so strong in Christianity. Attention to the man-in-the-ditch emphasizes humility – and, crucially, surprise.

Neto Leão's "Not a Clergyman, Just a Man" revisits Illich's "The Vanishing Clergyman" and explores the ways in which Illich's pleas for "a new Church" were informed by his travels and experiences in Latin America. We know little of these journeys, as Illich seems to have made deliberate efforts to cover his tracks. Indeed he once told me – not without a touch of pride, I remember thinking – that he had made sure his biography would remain "hidden." But I find Leão's speculations plausible. Illich did envision a new Church, disentangled from governance and social service and re-centred on celebration, and, from his first travels in Puerto Rico in the early 1950's, he was inspired by the style of celebration he encountered there. I think that Leão is also right that the spirit of complementarity is already evident in Illich' earliest efforts to reimagine mission and remodel the church. One sees it in his insistence on the indissoluble unity of innovation and tradition, as well as in his attempt to distinguish the Church as surprise – "the pearl in the net" – from the Church as an institution shaped by the same power relations as any other institution. The powerless Church can only live, Illich says, "at the edge of time, at the end...of time" – in the world but not of it. Neto Leão celebrates and preserves this spirit in his essay.

Brother John's "Apocalypse Now!" makes a persuasive case that Illich's entire body of work can be understood as constituting an *apocalypse*. This was a fairly common genre of religious writing at the time of Jesus, and is most famously represented in the Bible in the Revelation to St. John the Divine. In my chapter headed Apocalypse I pointed to contradictory statements by Illich – the first, from 1992, asserting that he had "always abstained from making apocalyptic statements;" the second, from five years later, which allowed – hesitantly, he said – that he felt himself to be living "in an apocalyptic world," and even that it "might be quite close to the end of

the world." I interpreted this altered stance not as a change of mind, but as a final overcoming of his reluctance to give a confusing and bound-to-be misunderstood name to his view, matured over many years, that modernity is a progressive revelation of what Illich called "the mystery of evil" or, in another of his formulas, "the Incarnation turned inside out." His reluctance had been based, I thought, on the colloquial use of the term apocalypse as referring not to revelation, its meaning in Greek, but to destruction, often gruesome and vengeful. I dealt with the difficulty presented by this word by saying that Illich was an apocalyptic thinker, insofar as he saw an inexorable movement of revelation at work in modern history, and a non-apocalyptic thinker, insofar as he rejected the idea that the world will end all at once in a spectacular and pyrotechnic display of divine vengeance. I also distinguished between the "mythological" apocalypse, with its burning lakes, scarlet women, and warrior Christ, and that timeless Last Judgment which William Blake says may pass at any moment "upon that individual [who] Rejects Error and Embraces Truth."

Brother John takes gentle exception with me on this point and "part[s] company to a certain extent." He recognizes the element in the New Testament that I called mythological but prefers to characterize it as *symbolic*, saying that "the dramatic, violent and often bizarre images in which [John's New Testament vision] is clothed do not express its essence." In this way, he is able to argue that the Book of Revelation, and "apocalyptic thought" more generally, is not concerned primarily with the end of the world but rather with the "process" that is set in motion by "God's entry into history." He also denies my claim that there is a certain ambivalence in the New Testament about whether the Kingdom is here now, present and available, or about to arrive by fire and the sword, with "weeping and gnashing of teeth."

It seems to me that we agree entirely about Illich –

within Brother John's definitions I think Illich's work is well understood as an apocalypse – but I think we disagree a little on the New Testament. I cannot help detecting a spirit of revenge and *ressentiment* in the Revelation to John, even when I read it symbolically. I have felt this aversion in all my attempts to read this book, going back to my youth, but I think I have also been influenced in this regard by Carl Jung's *Answer to Job*. This late work of Jung's – to summarize it very briefly – addresses the question of how evil is to be explained in a world created ex nihilo by an all-good God. It begins with the first expression of the problem in the book of Job where a God seemingly out of touch with his own omniscience makes a highly discreditable bet with his miscreant son Satan to torture a man, Job, who has shown him nothing by fealty and praise. According to Jung, Job shows himself "a better man" – a problem that can only finally be addressed by God himself becoming a man and submitting to the human condition. Thus begins the "constellation," in Jung's word, of the Son of Man archetype – evident, for example, in Daniel's dream of "one like a son of man" presented before a senescent "ancient of days" (Daniel 7:13), or Ezekiel' visions of "the glory of the Lord" in the "likeness of a human form" (Ezekiel 1:26) and culminating in the appearance of the Christ. But, for Jung, the problem has only been displaced onto an all-good Christ. The suppressed darkness of God must emerge, and emerge it does, Jung thinks, in the revenge fantasy of Revelation, where Jesus returns at the head of an army with a sword in his teeth and Babylon is "thrown down with violence." (Rev. 18: 21). Symbolic, of course, but what does it symbolize?

The second point which I can only mention in passing here is the larger ambivalence of the New Testament. In *The Rivers North of the Future* (p. 48), Illich described the Incarnation to me as something that "is a surprise, remains a surprise and *could not exist as anything else*." But, in various

places in the gospels, Jesus instructs his disciples to "search the scriptures" where they will find that all the events of his life, death and resurrection have been foretold, foreordained and shown to be "necessary," as the resurrected Lord says to the disciples he meets on the road to Emmaus. What can only exist as a surprise, and depends on Mary's assent to even occur (since her *yes* means nothing if a *no* had not been possible) cannot at the same time be necessary. This can be called complementarity or contradiction but has to be accounted for either way.

At the end of a long, recorded conversation in 1988, Illich unveiled his, to me, astonishing idea that "the fate of Western culture" can be comprehended in the saying, *Corruptio optimi quae est pessima*. He then said that his contemplation of this "evil deeper than any evil I could have known with my unaided eyes and mind" had led him to "become increasingly tentative, but also more curious and totally engaged in searching for its origin, which is the voice of him who speaks." (I note the present tense and the implication that the one who spoke is still speaking.) Illich insisted repeatedly on his orthodoxy, and I think he is well understood as someone who tested the limits of his tradition without ever exceeding them. However, he does counsel a search for the living voice that is at the *origin* even as it exceeds it. Illich's apocalypse, as Brother John shows, is the revelation of what happens when the word of God is mistaken and misappropriated. We are all implicated and engulfed in this misunderstanding. How deep our consequent rethinking and rereading must go in order to discover John Milbank's "future we have missed" – the future north of the future – remains for me an open question.

Sajay Samuel's "An Unlit Candle" poses a major challenge, and one that I suspect his wide reading makes him better equipped to address than I am. However, he's addressed it to me, so I'll try. Complementarity, traditionally, was hi-

erarchical. How opposing terms and jurisdictions were to be understood and assigned was determined at another level of the hierarchy in which they were found. Samuel repeats Louis Dumont's example of "the two swords" imagined by Pope Gelasius I: the temporal power possessed by the Emperor, the spiritual authority invested in the Pope. Clashes between them had to be settled at a higher level of the hierarchy. In spiritual matters the Pope's authority included and subsumed the Emperor's power, while in the administration of earthly justice the Pope must bow to the Emperor. In a hierarchy, complementary pairs are not simply and flatly opposed – not "symmetrical," Samuel says – because each varies in significance, weight, and authority according to its relation to a higher and more inclusive level of the hierarchy in which they appear. This leads Samuel to ask whether the definition I give to complementarity in the book, and the philosophy of complementarity to which I try to assimilate Illich, is not "incomplete."

Good question. Let me begin with *Gender* – the only place where Illich explicitly addresses the subject of complementarity. Illich says, rather mysteriously, in one of the book's titled footnotes, that his idea of gender "is nourished by the scholastic concept of *relatio subsistens*." He does not say what this concept is, and I imagine that he had relatively few readers who recognized it as a way of characterizing the mysterious character of a triune God composed of three *persons*, each independent and yet related. But those few who did might then have wondered whether gender, for Illich, wasn't the bottom story of a hierarchy, and one that reaches ultimately into the very nature of God. Illich, however, doesn't say so. Indeed he says so remarkably little that the whole book fairly readily lends itself to the idea that Illich, if not actually an esoteric writer, was one who kept a lot of his cards very close to his chest. Why should this be? My provisional answer would be

that he wanted to address, or better, to *convene* a public, and, since he knew all too well the state of deep moral, philosophical and theological confusion in which his potential readers lived, he shaped and limited his rhetoric accordingly. Order and hierarchy are principles long ago slain on the battlefields of *equality* – that most irresistible face of the *corruptio optimi*. It's not that complementary pairs *shouldn't* be ranked and reconciled according to how they serve more comprehensive ends, it's that they *can't* be because no one can agree on what these ends are.

Complementarity to me is a fact – of ecology, where species oppose and limit each other, of language, where opposing terms define each other, of physiology, where all our activities depend on our opposing limbs. I pointed to the prevalence of this idea in Illich's work – whether it was tradition and innovation in church reform, the "multiple balances" constituting conviviality, the vernacular as a bulwark against commodification, or the interplay of Christ and anti-Christ in the unfolding of Christianity. I agree that what these things mean depends on their context. Tradition and innovation, for example, would be a sterile pair, if one didn't know at a given moment whose turn it was to curtsy and whose to bow. There must be a context in which they dance and in which they are reconciled. Whether there must be a *hierarchy* in which the "higher" assigns the "lower" its significance is, I think, a question. The very idea that one knows what is higher rankles a little – the God who was once "above" now has no definite place. Neighbours, even loved ones, fail to agree on their "values."

My prescription is conversation, and a deep pluralism which recognizes that different peoples now live in incommensurable moral orders and must practice peaceful and respectful diplomacy if they are not to go to war. In Canada, for example, the very legitimacy of the country is in question in various indigenous discourses. Hierarchy appears, under these circumstances, premature. What is higher is precisely what is in dis-

pute. Christianity has failed, but its unconscious inheritors have not yet heard the news. The conversation, if there is to be a conversation, is just beginning.

Illich suggests a search, tentative and curious, for the "origin." This is one path – Christians, the ones who know they are Christians and the many more who don't, must find the source, if they are ever to come to terms with themselves and the others whom they have wronged. But there are other paths, and other peoples, and I think it will be a long time before anyone again has assured knowledge of the proper relations between Pope and Emperor, vernacular and market or any other opposing pair.

Nicola Labanca's "Systems, unexpectedness, flatness and counterproductivity" is a marvel. Illich left behind him a deeply felt but still fairly sketchy critique of what he called "the age of systems." Initially attracted to cybernetics, he sensed by the early 80's that this philosophy would produce what he called disembodiment – a conception of oneself not as an enfleshed person but as a system. He went on to specify quite clearly the difference between the age of instrumentality, in which tools remained distinct from their users, and the age of systems, in which the user is indistinguishable from the system. He also recognized that this meant that his work of the 1970's had been founded on assumptions that no longer obtained - the main one being that he was addressing a public able to distinguish itself from its toolkit, however gigantic, of schools, hospitals, highways etc. and also able, in theory at least, to alter and limit these tools. Indeed, he had adopted the word *tools*, in contradistinction to *technology* – that more encompassing and fateful ensemble of which Heidegger, Ellul and others had written – as a way of underlining the possibility of isolating, analyzing and responsibly limiting these tools. Systems blurred all assumed boundaries and made the problem completely intractable. The health care "establish-

ment" which he had thought to address in Medical Nemesis as a "threat to health" had begun to appear to him by the mid-80's as no establishment at all but rather as a function of a system that obeyed its own laws and offered no external handle – moral or epistemological - by which it might be controlled or reformed.

Beyond this sense that the "outside" had disappeared, that the computer could in no way be classified as a *tool* in the received sense, and that all transcendence was being swallowed by a philosophy of pure immanence, Illich said relatively little about the character of systems. Labanca has taken up this task and helped me to understand what Illich intuited. I have barely begun to assimilate what he has written, but here are a few initial thoughts. Because they are little more than places to start, I'll put them in point form:

-Labanca shows the folly of the current popular habit of talking about science as if it were a single, compact, intelligible object, always the same. Science has a history, and one of the most precious intellectual achievement of our time has been the work done by numerous scholars in transforming science from an all-conquering idealization into a concrete historical practice. Complex systems science is not, as people say, your grandmother's science. It is something radically new.

-On the other hand, complex system science can be seen a destiny implicit in the natural philosophy of Galileo and Bacon all along. The mechanical philosophers of the Enlightenment took the point of view of God. They eliminated all divine caprice but assumed the stability and intelligibility that inherently belonged to a created order. But they were, at the same time, as Nietzsche said, the "gravediggers" of God. Without God, the *autopoesis* or self-making of the cybernetic philosophers was bound to follow sooner or later. What makes itself

must necessarily lack those stable boundary conditions that Labanca says are the hallmark of Newtonian science.

-Illich emphasized the disembodying character of systems theory – sometimes to the point that he declined to even discuss what might be true in such theory. For example, he rejected out of hand British scientist James Lovelock's Gaia Hypothesis, saying that there was nothing in it that he was willing to recognize as science and that it was "inimical to what earth is." (I have written at more length about my unsuccessful efforts at dialogue with Illich on this subject in an essay called "Gaia and the Path of the Earth" which can be found on my website.) But it seems clear to me, nonetheless, that there is something true in systems theory. Such theory, for example, amends the classical expression of the theory of evolution which held that species evolve in relation to a relatively fixed "environment." A systems perspective shows, in Labanca's words, that "species evolve in relation to their environment *while the environment evolves in relation to them*." And one can add, moreover, that the evolution of species, at least in part, constitutes the environment. As someone who for many years urged his colleagues at the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation to forsake the pose of objectivity and recognize the ways in which they were creating the reality which they pretended to be only observing, I do not at all want to deny the insights of systems theory on this point.

-We might conclude that systems theory is true, in a limited, sense but also disembodying. What then? Here Labanca's hint that we might need to "practice a complementary style of relationality to that impressed into systems" is germane. It would be easier and less threatening to acknowledge the partial truth of systems theory if one had a place to stand outside it.

-Labanca suggests that systems, by definition, dissolve boundaries and amplify perturbations thus creating a condition of growing instability. Reassurance and relief from the feeling of standing in mid-air is then sought in intensifying efforts at surveillance and control. One "replaces unknown boundary conditions with known processes that operate in both the machine and the animal." I think this explains a great deal of what we've seen during the panic of the last two plus years – the need for control, even to the easy embrace of the term *lockdown*, until then rarely heard outside of prisons, seemed obvious to most even before anything was known about the actual threat posed by the novel virus.

-Labanca's essay makes a crucial contribution, along with others of his writings, to the clarification of Illich's critique of life as an "institutional fetish." Illich spoke in 1989, in an address to a Lutheran convocation in Chicago, of "a cybernetic system which, in real time, is both model and reality, a process which observes and defines, regulates and sustains itself." I have contemplated that sentence with rueful admiration for thirty years and seen its truth born out in contemporaries who speak without art or irony of the state of their *systems*, making no distinction, and leaving no distance, between themselves and the model they incarnate. Labanca's remarks on *recursivity* and the ways in which "processes overcome substance" have helped me to delve further into that remarkable sentence.

-Labanca's descriptions of systems as marked by uncertain and indefinite boundaries and a "flat ontology" clarify points made in other essays in this collection. One is the notion of person, described by Bob Kugelmann as characterized, ideally, by wholeness, completeness, uniqueness and independence-in-relation. Labanca makes it clear why persons cannot

exist when systems define what we are. Another is hierarchy, which Sajay Samuel identifies as the crucial context in which complementarity must be located and by which it must be modulated. But hierarchies, Labanca writes, are "deconstructable" within systems – another reason why there's a lot of intellectual spade work to do before hierarchies of any kind will be able to settle disagreements or resolve contradictions.

-Finally, I think that Labanca has sketched the outlines, not just of a new science, but also of a new religion. "What's wrong with Gaia," Illich said to me, "is these guys [i.e. those who propound such theories] want to be scientific. What the difference is between that kind of science and religion is, I don't know." (These are the last words in *Ivan Illich in Conversation*.) I will not take up the point here – and there is much else of value in Labanca's essay that I have passed by as well – but it seems to me that the largest problem posed by systems theory is that it dissolves all standpoints and thereby makes it impossible to discover the roof, or limit, which was always the object and end of Illich's quest. I do not think this place to stand will now be found until we can recover its ground.

It remains to discuss Wolfgang Palaver's review, reprinted here, for the *Bulletin* of the Colloquium on Violence and Religion. Palaver has been a great friend to Illich studies, and his invitation to me to come to the University of Innsbruck, where he teaches theology, to lecture on *The Rivers North of the Future* was a major encouragement at a time when that book was new and still in search of its public. He shows his skill and discernment in interpreting Illich by the digest he gives of my book and in the way he relates Illich's work to that of his friend and teacher René Girard. He also makes a promising analogy, in light of his recent studies of Gandhi, between Illich's treatment of gender and Gandhi's treatment

of caste – a subject on which I hope to hear more from him one day. But, finally, he comes to what has become a sticking point between us: Illich's denunciation of *life* as a contemporary idol, and the "trap" into which he thinks I have "partly" fallen by turning Illich's "warnings into prescriptions." The previous issue of *Conspiratio* included a long essay in which I tried to respond to Palaver – and to Jean Pierre Dupuy who had made a related criticism – so I will be brief here.

René Girard argued the superiority of the Gospel text "let the dead bury their dead" – Jesus' statement to the young man who wants to follow him but asks leave to first bury his father – to Sophocles' play *Antigone* in which the eponymous protagonist sacrifices her own life rather than leave her fallen brother unburied as the king has ordered. The contrast between these texts founds a distinction, for Girard and Palaver, between a Biblical religion of life, in which death is an enemy that will finally be destroyed, and a classical or tragic view in which death is an inexorable power that must finally receive its dignity, its tribute and its ceremony. Palaver finds various hints both in Illich, and in my exposition of his thought, which indicate that both of us may be "closer to the tragic thinking than to the biblical spirit." He takes up, for example, Illich's wrestle with the question of how contemporary persons can discover, while under comprehensive medical management, a fitting way and time to die and concludes that Illich's view "comes close to euthanasia." He also wonders whether Illich's lifelong emphasis on dying as a personal and, in Illich's word, "transitive" act does not attempt to control what is properly one of life's "existential uncontrollabilities," a phrase he quotes from German sociologist Hartmut Rosa.

I am puzzled as to what the issue really is here. I don't think it's theological. Amateur as I am in that discipline, I suspect that were Palaver to read, as perhaps he has, Illich's early essays "Rehearsal for Death" and "The End of Human

Life," both recently republished in *The Powerless Church*, that he would have no theological objection to their arguments. The problem seems to be that any cultivation of an art of dying, any hint that dying is something that we can do, rather just submit to at the termination of treatment, or any suggestion that the war on death may have consequences that are injurious to life, brings the reproach that one is somehow on the side of death and on the verge of lapsing back into paganism and tragedy. Perhaps there's a confusion between the "life more abundant" that is promised in Christ and the "human resource" that Illich thinks is its parody and corruption. Perhaps Palaver takes a more sanguine view of medical hegemony than Illich does. In any case I think the issue is practical and political.

I'll quickly try to say what I mean then stop. The measures implemented against the pandemic in the last two plus years were justified as "life-saving." Very old people were locked up and deprived of all contact with their loved ones in order to save their *lives*. Often enough they were neglected as part of this salvation. People were deprived of livelihood in the interest of *life*. Foundational rights, like informed consent, were suspended in order to force a vaccine on people who didn't want it. This right, enumerated in the 1947 Nuremberg Code, was arguably the very basis on which post-war medicine rested its legitimacy. I won't go on. It seems plain enough to me that *life* here is not life eternal or life more abundant, or even just the quality of aliveness. It is an idol, monopolized by a priesthood, and operated by that priesthood in its own interests. People submit because they are afraid and have lost any sense of their own competence and power of judgment. In the name of this idol, people have been injured and abused, inequality and unaccountable power have increased, uncertain and contested science has been presented as unanimous and unquestionable, a demonstrable

censorship has been instituted, and all this, as I said, has been justified in the name of life.

I have watched with some amazement, as old friends have supported and applauded policies that I would have expected them to question and resist. The conclusion I have been forced to is that I'm witnessing the power of the *sacred* – and I mean the sacred in exactly the sense in which I learned to think of it from René Girard – as something that people make and then deny that they have made in order to worship it and claim its peace and protection. The new religious variety that's founded on this *sacred* is one of the degenerations of the gospel that Illich summarized under the tag *corruptio optimi pessima* and should not be mistaken for the original which it corrupts. I do not think that Illich is any less a friend to life in its proper sense than is Palaver. Rather I think he recognized that the denial of death leads to the fetishization of life in the wrong sense. By denial I mean making death an enemy and an obscenity. I don't think that the venerable philosophical tradition that claims that living well involves learning to die is, or should be, at odds with Christianity. I think that Illich was trying to secure the foundation for fullness of life, and I hope that one day Wolfgang Palaver will see that he is mistaken in connecting him in any way with "tragic thinking" or "the violent sacred."

Reviews

Educing Ivan Illich by John Baldacchino

Review by Dennis Atkinson †

John Baldacchino has produced a book of depth and perspicacity, a book that thinks and writes with the work of Ivan Illich. *Educing Ivan Illich: Reform, Contingency and Disestablishment*, provides a sophisticated, sympathetic and innovative interrogation of the work and social concerns that run through Illich's opus. Baldacchino's text is lucid, scholarly and provocative. There is a spirit of raw honesty to confront the hubris and failings of current 'schooled' societies. Supporting Illich's call for 'research on education' in relation to education's relations with wider socio-political and ethical issues, Baldacchino shows how Illich "*exits* education from its spherical self and floats it into an infinite universe of vernaculars (p.100)." In doing so education faces what William James called a multiverse or what others have called a pluriverse and a world of contingency, with the requirement to develop and evolve convivial assemblages.

Baldacchino's exposition works with a number of key concepts deployed by Illich but his inquiry illustrates these with a lucidity that expands them to provide current educational enquiry and practice with a reaffirmation but also novel interpretations and applications of Illich's work. The book contains critical analyses of the institutionalising of education as a schooled process and how society itself has become a schooled assemblage. Baldacchino revisits Kant's critique as well as the work of Mill, Marx, Engels, Dewey, Greene and others who, in their respective epochs argued against the dulling of the capacity to 'learn' by the institutional formats of education.

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Atkinson, D. Educing Ivan Illich by John Baldacchino.
Conspiratio, Spring 2022, p.243-246.

The early chapters of *Educing Ivan Illich* deal with an evaluation of the latter's publications and the themes of immanence and utopia whilst chapters 4-8 concern the processes of tradition, learning, reform, contingency and disestablishment. They articulate the notion of deschooling not as a rejection of schools or education, but of its institutionalization and its consequent pedagogizing force; the creation and perpetuation of selected pedagogic identities, driven in current epochs by capitalist competition, exploitation and individualism. The production of human capital whereby those practices and human subjects deemed to be 'irrelevant to the economy' (p.58) can be discarded.

My take on Baldacchino's thinking with Illich is that we are encouraged to view Illich's approach to deschooling, conviviality, learning, contingency and disestablishment less in terms of a *project* but more in terms of a *journey*, always incomplete. It is not a plan, not like a children's 'connect the dots' puzzle whereby the outcome is pre-ordained. It is a continuous becoming-making in which doubt and uncertainty are always nearby to disrupt and derail. It is a journey in which many pathways exist other than those chosen by dominant forces such as capitalism, education, religion, and it is these other obscured pathways that can lead towards other modes of community, value and social existence. Baldacchino refers us to thinkers in different epochs who have challenged the hegemony of established institutions and their identitarian forces including Nicolas Cusano, Hannah Arendt and Gillian Rose, others such as bel hooks, Maxine Greene and Fred Moten come to mind.

This crucial contrast between a project/planning and a journey is brought out towards the end of Baldacchino's book where Illich recalls a seminal moment in conversation with his old teacher and friend, Jacques Maritain. Illich, working in Puerto Rico, was involved with the Government's

manpower qualification planning board and was concerned about the idea of *qualified manpower*. In response to Illich's uneasiness Maritain asks him, "Is not planning, which you talk about, a sin, a new species within the vices which grow out of presumption?" (161). Reflecting on this conversation years later Illich tells us that "in thinking about humans as resources that can be managed, *a new certitude about human nature* would be brought into existence surreptitiously (161)." Baldacchino, following Illich, argues that this sin of planning, its certitude and its objectifying force colonises life which then becomes institutionally managed like any other resource.

Education for Illich and Baldacchino is something like a journey to be made alongside others with all its problems, set-backs, surprises and achievements; a convivial journey in which both perspectives on tradition as well as processes of self-invention inform its journeying. Of course, we can work from plans and projects, from established curricula, from assessment apparatuses, but do these limit and constrain our views and understanding of learning and teaching? In contrast can we develop modes of practice that acknowledge the becoming-making of each learner's and teacher's pathways of learning and teaching? This would demand some radical reconceptions of education and its modes of practice, perhaps of the school and of the university, towards more convivial social assemblages in which learning and teaching are not viewed as projects but as journeys of social and individual invention. This would entail what we might call an education-in-the-making that responds to the autonomy and divergence of practice and what Baldacchino calls the 'gift and grace of contingency' (159). Contingency for Baldacchino is "that by which we gain the freedom in whose gift we have the freedom to buck the trend, act against all odds and conventions and assert that it is possible to move against established necessities (159-160)."

Baldacchino, through Illich, challenges us to reclaim education from its current manifestations and assumptions about teaching and learning. In *educing* Illich Baldacchino draws out the vital relevance and potential of his work for our world today and its uncertain future. This book is not a primer for Illich's work, Baldacchino's interrogation and creative development of key concepts offers a deeply philosophical engagement and analysis that extends and expands Illich's opus. He reviews the philosophical heritage of the key concepts emerging within Illich's books, immanence, utopia, tradition, learning, reform, contingency and disestablishment and then enlarges upon these in relation to our current epoch.

Perhaps the journey of pedagogic practice might be viewed in terms of an evolving dynamic from the gift and grace of contingency, offering opportunities for disestablishment and reform, towards assemblages of conviviality. In the contingency of an encounter how can I think, visualise, act? How can I develop new more effective relations? Such questions, key to Baldacchino's journey, and to pedagogical work, concern aesthetic, political and ethical becoming-making, forms of life yet to emerge, reforming modes of practice in a creative adventure constituted in the dynamic across contingency, disestablishment, reform and conviviality. Reading Baldacchino's text is an opportunity for readers to take on the challenge and make such a journey, to engage with its surprises, potentials, problematising, caring and hope.

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Translations

A Construção Institucional de um Novo Fetiche: a vida humana*

By Ivan Illich
Translation by Neto Leão and Nilo Coradini

Senhoras e Senhores. No dia primeiro de Janeiro de 1988, vocês me informaram, a *Evangelical Lutheran Church of America* (Igreja Luterana Evangélica da América) passou a existir. É o resultado da fusão de três Igrejas antecessoras. Com 5,6 milhões de membros, é a quarta maior Igreja Cristã dos Estados Unidos. Essa Igreja e seu bispo convocaram uma conferência que vocês nomearam de "encontro de planejamento". Eu sou um dentre meia-dúzia de forasteiros que foram convidados para comentar sobre o contexto ao qual a missão da nova Igreja deve abordar.

Pediram para que eu tratasse de algo chamado "recursos e instituições". Eu tomo esse desafio fazendo-os refletir sobre uma característica das instituições do século XX: sua habilidade de gerar entidades que podem ser definidas como necessidades básicas e que, por sua vez, definem recursos que são percebidos como sendo escassos. Para ilustrar meu ponto, sugiro que olhem para a relação institucional da Igreja com uma nova entidade chamada "vida", uma noção a qual tem sido referida amplamente como "*uma* vida", "vidas americanas", "vida humana na Terra" e por alguns como "Gaia, a vida da biosfera". Estas palavras são, agora, frequentemente usadas no debate público e se referem a um novo tipo de construto social: uma entidade da qual ninguém ousa se livrar. Analisando esse discurso, sou levado à conclusão de que a vida "entitativa", o sujeito desse novo discurso, é referido como algo precioso, ameaçado, escasso.

* Apresentado como um "Encontro de Planejamento" da *Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* (Igreja Luterana Evangélica na América). Chicago, 29 de Março de 1989

Illich, I. A Construção Institucional de um Novo Fetiche: a vida humana. Conspiratio, Spring 2022, p.251-266.

É também referido como algo passível de gestão institucional, algo que convida para o treinamento de cada vez mais novos especialistas, de cientistas de laboratório a terapeutas e cuidadores profissionais. Muitas Igrejas Cristãs reivindicam uma responsabilidade imanente enquanto guardiãs da "vida", ou enquanto especialistas na sua definição. Por outro lado, a "vida na Terra" desempenha um papel crucial na nova mitologia e filosofia das eco-ciências e é discutida como o recurso derradeiro a ser protegido. A vida é um exemplo eminente de um postulado que é conveniente para a expansão do controle institucional sobre recursos que, por não serem examinados, assumem as características de uma certeza.

Apresentarei cinco observações históricas para embasar a minha tese. Darei a cada uma delas a forma de um pequeno plano de estudos. Tal organização do meu material, na forma de unidades conceituais que poderiam servir como esquemas para aulas ou seminários torna mais fácil para vocês conduzirem a discussão para a qual me convidaram. Ela também sugere as linhas para um projeto de pesquisa histórica e teológica. A Igreja Luterana para a qual devemos a liderança no campo de estudos bíblicos pode tomar a liderança na exploração da relação entre a vida na Bíblia e a acepção dada ao termo atualmente.

Philip Hefner me pediu para fazer uma apresentação potente para gerar uma resposta teológica e uma discussão centrada em temas concretos. Então eu começo postulando uma tese:

> A "vida humana" é um construto social recente, algo que agora concebemos tão desapercebidamente que não nos atrevemos a questionar de maneira séria. Eu proponho que a igreja exorcize referências à nova vida substantiva de seu próprio discurso.

A vida constitui um referente essencial nos atuais discursos ecológico, médico, legal, político e ético. Aqueles que o usam, esquecem consistentemente que a noção tem uma história; que é uma noção ocidental, em última análise o resultado de uma perversão da mensagem cristã. E é também uma noção altamente contemporânea, com conotações confusas que impedem a palavra de denotar qualquer noção precisa. Pensar em termos de "uma vida" e "vida humana" conota vagamente algo de extrema importância e tende a abolir todos os limites que a decência e o senso comum até agora impuseram ao exercício da tutelagem profissional.

Da maneira que são usadas atualmente, as palavras inglesas "*life*" e "*a life*" ["vida" e "*uma* vida"] alimentam o ídolo mais poderoso que a Igreja já teve que encarar ao longo de sua história. Mais do que a ideologia das ordens imperiais ou feudais, mais do que o nacionalismo ou o progresso, mais do que o gnosticismo ou o iluminismo, a aceitação da vida substantiva como uma realidade dada por Deus se presta a uma nova corrupção da fé cristã. O que temo é o seguinte: que as Igrejas, devido a uma falta de enraizamento firme na linguagem bíblica, se engajem o poder que possuem de criar mitos, enquanto instituições do século XX, para fomentar, consagrar e santificar a noção secular e abstrata de "vida". Ao levar adiante esta empreitada profundamente "religiosa" e igualmente não-cristã, elas possibilitam que esta entidade espectral substitua progressivamente a noção de "pessoa" na qual o humanismo do individualismo ocidental se ancora. "*Uma* Vida" é passível de gestão, de melhoria e de avaliação em termos de recursos disponíveis de uma forma que é impensável quando falamos de "*uma* pessoa".

Parálise da Linguagem em um Mundo Gerido

Estou transformando a ideia de gestão em um problema chave do encontro entre Igreja e Mundo. Eu o faço

porque é por meio da gestão que se formam e confirmam aquelas certezas em virtude das quais nossa sociedade está organizada neste fim de século XX. Quero chamar sua atenção aos perigos em vez das oportunidades relacionadas ao endosso da Igreja a essas realidades, em colaboração com outras instituições.

A dificuldade de me referir a vocês neste assunto específico aparece na própria frase nas cartas sobre esta conferência que me enviaram ao longo dos últimos sete meses. Deixem-me ilustrar por meio de uma caricatura. No primeiro parágrafo da primeira carta, vocês falam sobre uma Igreja que "veio a existir" não no Pentecostes, mas em primeiro de Janeiro. Vocês nos informam que esta Igreja resultou não da vontade de Deus mas da fusão de três instituições antecedentes. Esta Igreja tem um bispo, mas um que é cercado de um corpo executivo, uma equipe que se organiza para planejar. Com uma inocência tocante, as agências similares ao Vaticano dos anos oitenta se apresentam em termos gerencialistas. Agora, não estou desafiando a necessidade de competência em contabilidade, serviços bancários, limpeza de janelas e angariamento de fundos. Não estou sequer questionando relações públicas, estatísticas e lobby. E penso que devemos chamar as coisas pelo seu nome. Mas a *inocência* com a qual as pessoas da igreja aplicam às pessoas de suas comunidades metáforas emprestadas de corporações merece mais atenção. Deixem-me contar-lhes uma estória.

Um dos meus grandes professores foi Jacques Maritain, filósofo, neo-tomista, poeta místico e, em certo momento da estória, um colega de Einstein no *Institute of Advanced Studies* (Instituto de Estudos Avançados) em *Princeton*. Era 1957, o segundo ano após minha transferência de uma paróquia de um bairro pobre em Nova Iorque para a administração da educação pública de Porto Rico. Eu havia me envolvido profundamente no poder recém-estabelecido

do conselho planificador de qualificação de mão-de-obra do governo da ilha. Estava profundamente chateado por conta das ambiguidades filosóficas para as quais o planejamento, *não* da Igreja, mas de algo chamado *mão-de-obra qualificada*, estava me levando. Dicionários não me ajudavam: "planejamento" [*planning*] não aparece no suplemento pré-guerra do *Oxford English Dictionary* [Dicionário de Inglês de Oxford], a pesar de ter sido lançado dentro do mesmo par de anos por Hitler, Stalin e Roosevelt. Então na minha visita seguinte ao continente fui ver o professor Maritain, que havia guiado meus estudos anteriormente, sobre a história da prática e teoria da virtude no ocidente cristão. Como eu poderia encaixar "planejamento" no sistema tradicional de hábitos responsáveis no qual eu havia aprendido a pensar? Eu tinha muita dificuldade de explicar para aquele senhor o significado do termo que eu estava usando: planejamento não era contabilidade, nem legislação, nem algum tipo de tabela horária de trens. Tomávamos chá na sua varanda. Seria a minha última visita a ele. Admirava seu lindo rosto, próximo da morte, transparente, como um daqueles patriarcas pintados em janelas góticas. A xícara em sua mão tremia. Então, finalmente, ele a largou, parecendo perturbado, e disse: "não é esse planejamento, do qual você me fala, um pecado, uma nova espécie de vício que se desenvolve da presunção?" Ele me fez entender que ao pensar sobre seres humanos como recursos que podem ser geridos, uma nova certeza sobre a natureza humana poderia ser trazida à existência subrepticiamente.

Hoje pareceria bobo examinar a noção de planejamento no contexto das virtudes cristãs. "Planejamento" há tempos adquiriu o status público de uma técnica testada e aceita. Hoje, se tornou bem impensável questionar o status epistêmico de noções como "gestão", "controle", "comunicação", "profissionalismo" e outras ideias correlatas. Dando a impressão de que sabem do que falam, conferencistas

aplicam estes conceitos imprudentemente a quase qualquer assunto que escolham. Por exemplo, uma vez que "mão-de-obra" se tornou um tema de pesquisa, de planejamento, de desenvolvimento, de investimento e de melhoria, o fantasma da "mão-de-obra" assume as características de uma realidade compacta. Mesmo as crianças aprendem a pensar em termos de *recursos humanos*. Seus jogos populares inculcam políticas, programas, tomadas de decisão. Ao longo da vida o conceito de escassez de recursos que precisam ser geridos adquire a guisa de uma certeza a-histórica. A onipotência das instituições modernas consiste em sua habilidade de criar e nomear a realidade social que os *experts* institucionais precisam como a substância que gerenciam.

O poder da gestão de *nomear* normas de saúde, educação, equilíbrio psíquico, desenvolvimento e outros ídolos modernos não é menos importante do que seu poder de criar de fato o contexto social no qual um padrão com relação a estes "valores" é experienciado como uma *necessidade* que por sua vez se traduz em um direito. Este ponto é de particular importância dentro da tradição da Igreja Luterana, com seu intenso conhecimento do dever da Igreja de anunciar a Palavra de Deus. A crítica evangélica do universo da terminologia burocrática que penetra e dá o tom de conversas e consciências cotidianas me parece uma tarefa dada por Deus, implicada no testemunho da Palavra de Deus.

Sentimentalismo Epistêmico

A experiência cotidiana de uma existência gerida leva todos nós a tomar um mudo de substâncias fictícias como algo dado. Nos leva a falar de tais fantasmas geridos com novas palavras como "progresso" no cuidado em saúde, educação universal, consciência global, desenvolvimento social; com palavras que sugerem algo "melhor", "científico", "moderno", "avançado", "benéfico para os pobres". As amebas verbais

por meio das quais nós designamos os fantasmas nascidos da gestão passam a conotar um iluminismo presunçoso, preocupação e racionalidade social sem, no entanto, denotar nada que possamos nós mesmos experienciar, sentir o gosto ou o cheiro. Nesse deserto semântico cheio de ecos confusos, precisamos de um amuleto, de algum fetiche prestigioso que possamos levar conosco para nos sentirmos defensores decentes de valores sagrados. Retrospectivamente, parece que a justiça social doméstica, o desenvolvimento no ultramar e a paz mundial são exemplos de tais fetiches; o novo fetiche é a Vida. Há algo de apocalíptico em procurar pela vida sob um microscópio (Mt. 24:26).

Existem pessoas que são pró-vida: algumas se opõem ao aborto, outras à vivisecção, à pena de morte ou à guerra. Seus oponentes querem a escolha de interromper a gravidez ou um tratamento capaz de salvar a vida. Como me disse Will Campbell três anos atrás [em 1986]: "a vida está despedaçando a Igreja". E ainda assim, ninguém ousa se opor ao uso desta ameba verbal na controvérsia pública. Menos ainda os homens da igreja. Alguns queimam incenso em homenagem à vida. Outros tornaram-se especialistas em traficar piedades pseudo-bíblicas sobre o "valor" da vida. Enquanto a Medicina gerencia a vida, do esperma até os vermes da tumba, as Igrejas adquiriram um novo status social ao enquadrar tais atividades médicas dentro do semblante de um discurso ético. A bioética provê um novo e prestigioso mercado de trabalho que dá preferência a clérigos desempregados com diplomas universitários. Eu estou, portanto, plenamente ciente da dificuldade que encaro quando escolho vida como meu caso exemplar de uma noção que toma uma existência espectral mas não questionada por meio de comprometimentos institucionais a novos domínios de gestão. Também estou ciente de um perigo adicional: eu apresento este exemplo a uma Igreja que resultou de uma fusão no último primeiro de

janeiro, e cujos executivos estão ansiosos para saber o que o mundo espera de sua instituição.

Posso lhes dizer: o ocidente cristão deu à luz a um tipo radicalmente diferente de condição humana, diferente de qualquer coisa que já tenha existido sem a obstetrícia milenar da Igreja. Apenas dentro da matriz a qual Jacques Ellul chama de "sistema tecnológico" esse novo tipo de condição humana conheceu sua plena fruição. Um novo papel se abre para instituições criadoras de mitos, moralizantes e legitimadoras, um papel que não pode ser bem entendido nos termos das antigas religiões, mas que algumas igrejas se apressam em desempenhar.

A nova sociedade tecnológica é singularmente incapaz de gerar mitos com os quais as pessoas possam formar ligações ricas e profundas. No entanto, para sua manutenção rudimentar, ela precisa de agências que criem fetiches legítimos aos quais o sentimentalismo epistêmico possa se prender. Em nenhum tempo anterior existiu uma demanda semelhante por agências capazes de fornecer tal serviço. E as maiores Igrejas Cristãs – tradicionalmente legítimas, intelectualmente prestigiosas, bem geridas e independentemente financiadas – aparecem como centros aptos a serem confiados com tal tarefa. A época de Gorbachev não é uma em que a Igreja enfrenta jacobinos. Um novo tipo de conspiração ameaça: não com o triunfalismo de um império de Constantino, mas com poderes que promovem o bem-estar, desenvolvimento e justiça como meios de manter a ordem e a paz.

O Evangelho da Vida

Eu não fui ensinado a crer que a Igreja encontra sua vocação ouvindo o mundo. A Igreja Luterana não é apenas populosa e rica; não é apenas uma das importantes agências definindo questões morais na vida pública e falando em nome da responsabilidade ética na política americana; não é apenas

uma das instituições-chave a prover coesão social, junto a orquestras, clubes democráticos, associações de alunos e as Filhas da Revolução Americana. Eu só posso crer que é também e, acima de tudo, uma das maiores embarcações às quais uma tradição teológica distinta foi confiada. Todos os cristãos americanos são de alguma forma dependentes da salvaguarda da Igreja Luterana com relação às palavras do Evangelho em um mundo cheio de termos lixo da ciência pop. A clara diferenciação entre *a* Vida e *uma* vida é hoje uma parte essencial e paradigmática de tal tarefa. Mas, como podemos pedir que a Igreja anatematize um ídolo no mesmo momento que ela perdeu sua habilidade de definir os termos que usa para anunciar sua própria mensagem? Como pedir que a Igreja navegue contra a própria corrente para a qual ela conduziu o ocidente?

A comparação entre a Igreja e um navio que navega pelo oceano vem desde os tempos patrísticos. Ela antecede a invenção do leme central e as conotações de completo controle que a imagem sugere. O pesado navio agora navega por águas completamente desconhecidas, aquelas que mapas medievais mostram na extremidade do mundo, onde os oceanos queimam, e dos céus chove enxofre. Não consigo pensar em uma imagem melhor para evocar a vocês o que significa ser a tripulação da Igreja nos anos 1990, quando os elementos por meio dos quais gerações navegaram praticamente desapareceram: ozônio e clima, variedade genética e imunidades hereditárias, florestas e baleias – isto é, de maneira mais importante, os cedros que dão ao Templo de Salomão sua qualidade sensual, o monstro na barriga de quem Jonas, como Cristo, passou três dias.

É nessas regiões de dissemelhança que vocês se encontram amontoados para uma semana de reflexões em prece, levando adiante as Boas Novas que o Senhor anuncia à Marta quando a diz "Eu sou Vida". Ele não diz "eu sou uma

vida". Ele diz, "Eu sou Vida", simplesmente. A vida hipostática tem suas raízes históricas na revelação de que uma pessoa humana, Jesus, é também Deus. Esta uma Vida é a substância da fé de Marta, e da nossa. Esperamos receber esta Vida como um presente, e esperamos compartilhá-la. Sabemos que esta Vida nos foi dada na Cruz e que não podemos procurá-la a não ser pela *via crucis*. Estar meramente vivo não significa ainda ter esta Vida. Esta Vida é gratuita, além e acima de ter nascido e vivido. Mas, como Agostinho e Lutero lembram constantemente, é um presente sem o qual estar vivo seria como ser pó.

Esta Vida é pessoal ao ponto de ser uma pessoa revelada e prometida [no Evangelho de] João 19[1]. Esta vida é algo profundamente diferente da vida que aparece como um substantivo nas manchetes dos jornais dos Estados Unidos. E à primeira vista, ambas não têm nada em comum. De um lado, a palavra diz: Emanuel, Deus feito homem, encarnação. De outro, o termo é usado para imputar substância ao processo pelo qual o médico assume responsabilidade, que as tecnologias prolongam e que armamentos atômicos protegem; que têm presença nas cortes, que pode ser dado de maneira equivocada; um processo sobre a destruição do qual, sem o procedimento devido, ou além das necessidades de defesa nacional ou do crescimento industrial, incita a fúria das organizações ditas pró-vida.

Entretanto, em uma análise mais próxima, a vida como uma propriedade, um valor, um recurso nacional, um direito, é uma noção ocidental que compartilha sua ancestralidade cristã com outras verdades chave em sua definição da sociedade secular. A noção de uma vida humana entitativa que pode ser protegida profissional e legalmente tem sido

1 Acreditamos que Ivan Illich tenha se confundido com a referência do capítulo. A tradução à língua espanhola também indica João 11:25, onde consta o diálogo de Jesus com Marta. [N.T.]

tortuosamente construída por meio de um discurso legal-médico-religioso-científico cujas raízes vão longe, na teologia. As conotações emocionais e conceituais da vida nas tradições Hindu, Budista ou Islâmica são completamente distintas daquelas evidentes no discurso corrente sobre o assunto nas democracias ocidentais. Esta é uma razão primária do porquê a desmistificação da vida é um serviço no qual historiadores treinados teologicamente devem se engajar.

Politicamente, movimentos pró-vida são patrocinados principalmente por denominações cristãs. E essas organizações têm desempenhado um papel significativo na construção social do ídolo do qual eu falo. Esta é a segunda razão pela qual olho para a Igreja para esclarecer a noção. As Igrejas Cristãs agora encaram uma feia tentação: a de cooperar na criação social de um fetiche que, de uma perspectiva teológica, é a perversão da Vida revelada em um ídolo.

Cinco Observações Sobre a História da Vida

A teologia cristã começa onde o iconoclasmo faz sua tarefa. Se, enquanto instituição, vocês colocam seus recursos em uma interpretação do Evangelho que tenta evitar o sentimentalismo epistêmico, a "história da vida" está, para vocês, na ordem do dia. E aqueles que se engajam nessa história devem manter em mente cinco pontos.

Primeiro, "vida", enquanto noção substantiva, faz sua primeira aparição por volta de 1801.

Acadêmicos bíblicos sabem bem da correspondência limitada da palavra hebraica para sangue, *dam*, e do termo grego que utilizaríamos para alma, nomeadamente, *psyché*. Nenhuma das duas está sequer próxima do significado do substantivo "vida". O conceito de vida não existe na antiguidade greco-romana: *bios* quer dizer o curso de um destino e *zoé* algo próximo do brilho do que é vivo. Em hebraico, o conceito é totalmente teocêntrico, uma implicação do sopro de Deus.

"Vida" como uma noção substantiva aparece 2000 anos depois, junto com a ciência que se propõe a estudá-la. O termo "biologia" foi cunhado no início do século XIX por Jean-Baptiste Lamarck. Ele reagia ao progresso barroco na botânica e na zoologia que tendia a reduzir as duas disciplinas ao status de mera classificação. Ao inventar um novo termo, ele também nomeou um novo campo de estudos, "a ciência da vida".

O gênio de Lamarck confrontou a tradição que atribuía a animais e vegetais infusões de almas distintas, junto da consequente divisão da natureza em três reinos: mineral, vegetal e animal. Ele postulou a existência de vida que distingue seres vivos de matéria inorgânica, não por estrutura visível, mas por organização. Desde Lamarck, a biologia procura pela "causa estimulante da organização" e sua localização em tecidos, células, protoplasma, no código genético ou em campos morfogênicos. "O que é 'vida'?" é, portanto, não uma questão perene, mas a reação da ciência *pop* à relatórios de pesquisa científica com relação a uma gama de diferentes fenômenos tais como reprodução, fisiologia, hereditariedade, organização, evolução e, mais recentemente, retroalimentação [*feedback*] e morfogênese. Vida aparece durante as guerras napoleônicas como um postulado que deveria levar os novos biólogos além dos diferentes estudos comparativos de mecanicistas, vitalistas e materialistas que competiam entre si. Então, conforme estudos morfológicos, fisiológicos e genéticos tornaram-se mais precisos próximo da metade do século XIX, vida e sua evolução tornaram-se os subprodutos nebulosos e não-intencionais que refletiam no discurso cotidiano um tipo de terminologia científica cada vez mais formal e abstrato.

Com a exceção possível das primeiras duas gerações de biólogos do século XIX, as *obiter dicta* [reflexões complementares] baseadas na noção substantiva de vida

não são, nem nunca foram, parte do argumento da biologia enquanto ciência. É, portanto, surpreendente observar com que solenidade biólogos têm sido recentemente convidados por executivos de igrejas para compor suas competências com as de teólogos no estudo de questões relacionadas à vida pós-lamarquiana.

Segundo, a perda da contingência, a morte da natureza e o aparecimento da vida são apenas aspectos distintos da mesma nova consciência.

Uma vertente que volta até Anaxágoras (500-428 a.C.) liga vários sistemas filosóficos que seriam de outra forma totalmente distintos entre si: o tema da vivacidade da natureza. Essa ideia da responsividade sensitiva da natureza encontrou sua constante expressão até o século XVI em versões animistas e idealistas, gnósticas e hilomórficas. Nestas variações, a natureza é experienciada como a matriz da qual todas as coisas nascem. No longo período entre Agostinho e Duns Escoto este poder da natureza de dar à luz era ancorado no mundo ser contingente à incessante vontade criativa de Deus. Pelo século XIII, e especialmente na escola teológica franciscana, o ser do mundo é visto como contingente não meramente com relação à criação de Deus, mas também com o gracioso compartilhamento de Seu próprio ser, Sua vida. O que quer que venha da possibilidade, *de potentia*, para a necessidade de sua própria existência, prospera por seu compartilhamento milagroso na intimidade de Deus, para o qual não há melhor palavra do que a Sua vida.

Com a revolução científica, o pensamento enraizado na contingência se esvaece, e um modelo mecanicista passa a dominar a percepção. Carolyn Merchant argumenta que a resultante "morte da natureza" tem sido o evento mais insidioso em mudar a visão e percepção do homem com relação ao universo. Mas também levantou a questão enervante: como explicar a existência de formas vivas em um

cosmos morto? A noção de vida substantiva então aparece não como uma resposta direta a esta questão, mas como uma espécie de xibolete insensato para preencher um vão.

Terceiro, a ideologia do individualismo possessivo abriu o caminho para que pudéssemos falar da vida como se fosse uma propriedade.

Desde o século XIX, a construção legal da sociedade cada vez mais reflete um novo radicalismo filosófico na percepção de si. O resultado é um rompimento com a ética que havia informado a história ocidental desde a antiguidade grega, claramente expressa pela mudança de preocupação pelo bem para valores. A sociedade está organizada sobre o postulado utilitarista que o homem nasce necessitado, e os valores de que necessita são escassos por definição. A possessão de vida em axiologia é, então, interpretada como o valor supremo. O *homo oeconomicus* se torna a referência para a reflexão ética. Viver é equacionado com a luta pela sobrevivência ou, de maneira mais radical, com a competição pela vida. Por já mais de um século se tornou costumeiro falar da "conservação da vida" como o derradeiro motivo da ação humana e da organização social. Hoje, alguns bioeticistas vão mais além. Enquanto até agora a lei implicou que uma pessoa é viva, *eles* demandam que nós reconheçamos que existe uma diferença profunda entre ter uma vida e meramente estar vivo. A habilidade comprovada de exercer este ato de possessão ou apropriação se torna o critério para o "estatuto de pessoa" [*personhood*] e para a existência de um sujeito legal.

Durante este mesmo período, o *homo oeconomicus* foi tomado subrepticiamente como o emblema e análogo de todos os seres vivos. Um antropomorfismo mecanístico se tornou corrente. Se imagina que bactérias imitam comportamentos "econômicos" e empreendem uma áspera competição pelo escasso oxigênio disponível em seu ambiente. Uma luta cósmica entre formas de vida cada vez mais complexas se

tornou o mito de origem antropomórfica da era científica.

Quarto, a natureza fictícia da vida aparece com destaque especial na discussão ecológica.

Ecologia pode significar o estudo das correlações entre formas vivas e seu habitat. O termo é também e cada vez mais usado como uma maneira filosófica de correlacionar todos os fenômenos conhecíveis. Ela então significa pensar em termos de um sistema cibernético que, em tempo real, é ambos modelo e realidade: um processo que observa e define, regula e sustenta a si mesmo. Dentro deste estilo de pensamento, "vida" se torna equiparada com o sistema: é o fetiche abstrato que simultaneamente o esconde e o constitui.

O sentimentalismo epistêmico tem suas raízes nesse desabamento da linha fronteiriça entre o processo cósmico e a substância, e a incorporação mítica de ambos no fetiche da vida. Concebido como sistema, o *cosmos* é imaginado em analogia com uma entidade que pode ser analisada racionalmente e gerida. Simultaneamente, este mesmíssimo mecanismo abstrato é romanticamente identificado com "vida" e referido em tons abafados como algo misterioso, polimórfico, fraco, que precisa de tenra proteção. Em um novo tipo de leitura, o Gênesis agora diz como Adão e Eva foram confiados com vida e a ulterior melhoria de sua qualidade. Este novo Adão é ceramista e enfermeiro do Golem.

Quinto, a "*'uma' vida*", fetiche da ciência *pop*, tende a anular a noção legal de pessoa.

Este processo é bem ilustrado na relação entre a prática médica, procedimentos jurídicos e discurso bioético. Médicos na tradição hipocrática estavam obrigados a restaurar o equilíbrio (a saúde) da constituição de seus pacientes, e eram proibidos de usar suas habilidades para lidar com a morte. Eles tinham que aceitar o poder da natureza de dissolver o contrato curador entre o paciente e seu médico. Quando os sinais hipocráticos indicavam ao médico que o paciente havia

entrado em agonia, o "átrio entre vida e morte", ele tinha que se retirar do que era agora um leito de morte. Os primeiros estremecimentos do feto – que significa se tornar vivo -- no útero e a agonia – uma luta pessoal para morrer – definiam os limites extremos nos quais um sujeito de cuidados médicos poderia ser concebido. Isso, agora, muda rapidamente. Os médicos são ensinados a se considerar responsáveis pelas vidas do momento em que o óvulo é fertilizado até o momento da captação de órgãos. No início do século XX, o médico passou a ser percebido como o tutor socialmente apontado de qualquer pessoa que, tendo sido posta no papel de paciente, perdeu uma porção de sua própria competência. Agora ele se torna o gerente socialmente responsável não de um paciente, mas de uma vida. De acordo com um dos bioeticistas mais bem respeitados, a ciência dotou a sociedade da habilidade de distinguir entre uma vida que é de uma pessoa humana e uma que corresponde a uma "não-pessoa humana". A esta última criatura falta a qualidade ou "capacidade requerida de desempenhar um papel na comunidade moral". A nova disciplina da bioética medeia entre a ciência *pop* e a lei ao criar a aparência de um discurso moral que ancora o "estatuto de pessoa" na avaliação qualitativa de um fetiche, "vida".

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